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Teaching the Narod to Listen: Nadezhda Briusova and Mass Music Education in Revolutionary Russia

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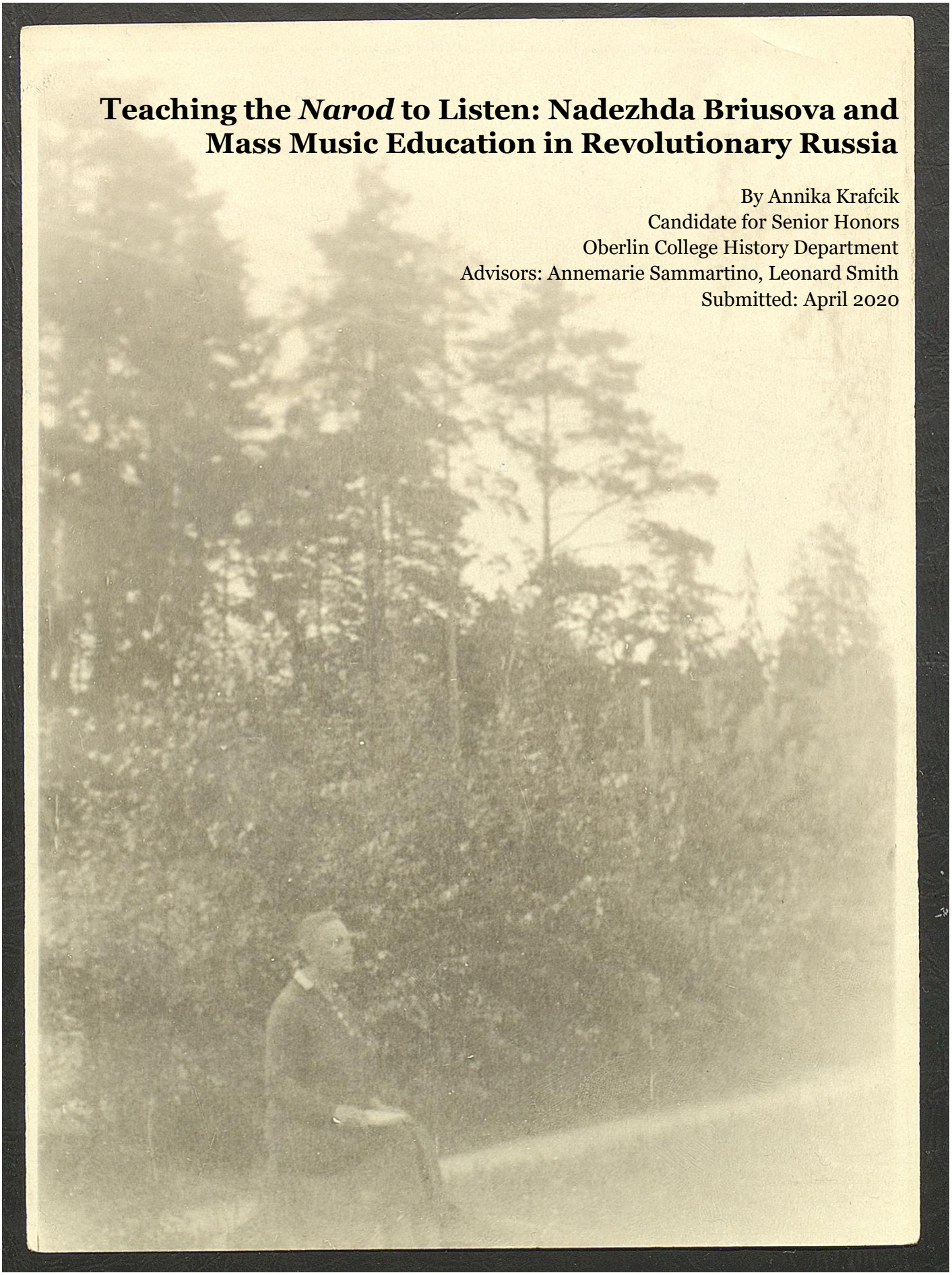

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Preface and Acknowledgements

What does music do? It was a sunny day in Sitka, Alaska, the summer of 2018, and I was thinking about this question. Bobbing up and down on a marine-cruise tour boat, spotting breaching whales from the bow, surrounded by cellists who were enjoying a day away from their instruments, I looked out over the waves and thought about what music meant to me. After over a decade of practicing and performing, it seemed to me that I had staggered into a cello career, not sure of what attracted me to music in the first place. I was battered and bruised from feelings of inadequacy, and disoriented from it all, I couldn't quite figure out what made music worth it. I was in Alaska, on a secluded island in the Tongass Rainforest, for the Sitka Cello Seminar, a summer camp which engages young professional cellists in discussions about finding meaning and purpose in a musical career. But after three weeks of talking about music, I still felt I was grasping at straws. I knew I should have an answer to that question (every musician should) – what does music do? – but I didn't have one. I looked up at the side of the boat and learned that its name was Nadezhda. I didn't know it then, but that was the beginning of the answer.

Nadezhda is a Russian woman's name that also means *hope*. An appropriate name then for the heroine of this story – Nadezhda Briusova – a woman whose ideas about music gave me a lot of hope. Briusova was a mass music educator from 20th-century Russia who believed in the collective and emotional power of music to create a better society. At the center of her mass music education program were "listening to music" classes, which, simply put, taught students of any age or musical ability how to listen to music for emotion, for story line, for characters.

Despite Briusova's prolific output, two years ago, on that Sitkan boat, I didn't know her name. In fact, if you asked most Russian/Soviet historians or musicologists, they probably wouldn't know who she was either. And this makes sense. In the world of musical

historiography, music educators, especially female music educators, are almost never in the limelight.

Little did I know, by the time I boarded that Sitkan boat, my path to finding Briusova had already begun, oddly enough, thanks to my interest in the Orthographic Reform of 1918. In 1918, just months after overthrowing the tsarist regime, Lenin removed four letters from the Cyrillic alphabet overnight. This decree had intrigued me. Why would Lenin have ordered it? How did people respond to the sudden abolition of 10% of their letters? Drawing on these questions, my study of Orthographic Reform, the original topic of my thesis prospectus, was intended to investigate how a new State asserts its power, paying close attention to the ways in which Bolshevik opposition employed the old alphabet to voice their resistance. Ultimately, I decided to move away from this topic because I worried that writing about an alphabet for over a year might grow tedious, but the core of the project – an interest in the Soviet state's period of transition and assertion of power – remained in my thoughts as I searched for a new topic.

I shifted my sights to music. The semester after my summer in Sitka, I studied abroad in St. Petersburg and took a class called "Shostakovich and His World."[1] Though this class piqued my interest in the ideological muddiness of 1920-30s Soviet music culture, I shuddered at the thought of using my thesis to write a music history. Music history had never been a favorite subject of mine. I found that it canonized the music of a select few dead men and often left other areas of music culture – education, performance, audience reception – completely unexplored. Still, intrigued by the ideological pluralism of the 1920s, so contrary to my previous view of a highly censored Soviet music scene, I decided to learn more. I read books on music and the revolution, which, refreshingly, were not just about Soviet composers. These books, Amy

[1] Briusova was never mentioned in this class either.

Nelson's *Music for the Revolution*, Neil Edmunds' *Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*, Marina Frolova-Walker's *Music and Soviet Power*, vividly depicted every corner of the Soviet music scene, drawing connections between publishing houses, composers, performers, Party organizations, government organizations, and music educators. It was a kind of music history I had never read before, and I wanted to contribute to it. I picked the corner of the music scene I was most interested in – music education – and began noticing a trend. Everywhere music education was mentioned, one woman's name popped up: Nadezhda Briusova. And that's how I found her. By October 2019, Briusova's mass music education program was my topic.

I began collecting everything she wrote – journal articles, speeches, memos – and I was transfixed. Her ideas about music were simple, yet profound. She did not just think about music as notes on a page or reverberations in a concert hall. She thought about the social function of music, the ability of music to bring people together, to transcend space and time, to transcend even the most disruptive event of the Russian history: the 1917 Revolution. Briusova's belief that music belongs to all of us meant that her mass music education program could not only survive the social and political upheaval of her time, but could retain relevance in our own day and age.

I have many people to thank for helping bring this project together. First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisors, Ari Sammartino and Leonard Smith. Professor Sammartino, my advisor since day one at Oberlin, has taught me so much over these last five years. Since she was the one who tricked me into studying the Russian language (I believe the conversation went something like this: "you took Latin? Oh you'll love Russian – it has even more cases!" How naive I was back then...), she is the reason I was able to do this project in this first place. Despite being on a well-deserved sabbatical this semester, Professor Sammartino, out of the kindest of her heart, continued to guide my writing over these last few months, offering a

much-needed helping hand when COVID-19 sent the world crashing down. I am also deeply grateful to Mr. Smith, who became my advisor this spring. Our weekly meetings – in person and over Zoom – served as an anchor in my schedule and always lifted my spirits.

Next, I would like to offer my thanks to our Honors Seminar class, led by the indomitable Zeinab Abul-Magd. Having a community of writers with which to share ideas, drafts, and commiserations made this process all the more joyous. I am thankful to Professor Abul-Magd for her radiant energy and sage advice over these last nine months. And I am thankful to Rami, Thomas, Milena, Eli, Emily, Jaihao, Will, whose work has been such an inspiration to me this year.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Oberlin History, Sociology, and Russian departments for awarding me the Frederick B. Artz Grant, the Jerome David Research Award, and the Richard Lankford Memorial Student Research Award, respectively, all of which made my research trip to Moscow possible. I would like to thank Chris Stolarski, Oberlin's beloved former Russian and Soviet history visiting professor, for sharing with me not only his historical expertise but the insider scoop on how to navigate the Lenin Library and Russian archives, information which was invaluable to me for my first-ever solo research trip to Russia. For teaching me the Russian language and helping with translations for this thesis, I am grateful to our Russian department professors, Tom Newlin, Tim Scholl, and Maia Solovieva. I would also like to thank Diane Lee, Oberlin's Interlibrary Loan director, who helped me locate a truly ridiculous number of Soviet music journal articles, without which much of my early research would have been impossible. And finally, I am forever grateful to my friends and family for providing moral support and so much love.

Introduction

On September 15, 1918, the best and brightest minds in mass education came from all over Soviet Russia to gather in Moscow for the First All-Russian Conference of Proletarian Culture Organizations (Proletkult). Less than a year after the October Revolution of 1917, these educators tasked themselves with the creation of a new culture that celebrated the hero of the revolution: the proletariat. However, they disagreed over what this proletarian culture should look like. Should it completely sever ties with the late-Imperial past? Or should it build on and then supersede bourgeois culture in the same dialectical way that Communism builds on and then supersedes capitalism? Stepping up to the conference podium, Nadezhda Briusova, a mass music educator from Moscow, argued that the creation of proletarian culture must start from a clean slate, representative of the endless possibilities of the new Soviet reality. She said:

> It is impossible to build a life on old ideals or old forms. What life has destroyed, what has become old, is dead, and will no longer serve as a basis for life.[2]

In direct contradiction to this jaw-dropping statement, within the same breath, Briusova spoke about the great achievements of Russian cultural heritage and the value of emotional and melodic folk song. Simultaneously declaring the start of a new era for the arts and expressing her own adoration for an imperial musical legacy, Briusova's speech reflects her own inner conflict about how to reconcile a nascent revolutionary culture with a splendid historical past. She would spend the rest of her life wrestling with the ramifications of this debate.

[2] Rosenberg, ed., 452. [Rosenberg's translation]. For the original Russian, see N. I. Briusova, B. B. Krasin, N. I. Korolev, and V. T. Kirillov, "Protokoly pervoi vserossiiskoi konferentsii proletarskikh kul'turno-prosvetitel'nykh organizatsii [Protocols of the First all-Russian Conference of Proletkul't]." Sept. 15-20, 1918.

Briusova began her pedagogical career in 1906, when she co-founded the Moscow People's Conservatory, a unique institution that provided the common people, the *narod*, with access to a high-quality music education. After the October Revolution, Briusova utilized her mass music education expertise in her positions as the chair of the Moscow Soviet Arts Commission, and as a leader of the music sections of Narkompros, the Soviet Union's department of education, and Proletkult, a non-Party organ dedicated to the creation of proletarian culture. A couple years later, she began teaching at the Moscow Conservatory, her alma mater, in the theory and folklore departments while also acting as the Conservatory's academic dean and dean of the pedagogical faculty. She wrote and edited for several major music journals, publishing articles on theory and composition, mass music education, children's creative production, listening to music classes, folk song, and musical knowledge.[3] By the time she died in 1951, Briusova's name was stamped on virtually every syllabus, textbook, journal article, and governmental policy related to mass music education in the Soviet Union.

Though she may not have admitted it, one of the most remarkable elements of Briusova's mass music education program was its continuity across the revolutionary divide.[4] The events of 1917 – the year of the February and October Revolutions – tore the fabric of everyday Russian life. The February Revolution resulted in the Tsar Nicholas II's abdication from the throne, marking the end of the 300-year Romanov dynasty, and the installation of a new Provisional Government. Eight tumultuous months later, in October, the Bolsheviks stormed the Winter

[3] Natalia Nikolaevna Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova i ee shkola muzykal'nogo obrazovaniia [Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education]*. Saratov: Saratovskii Pedagogical University, 1994.

[4] Revolutionary divide is a term used in Soviet historiography to describe the division between late-Imperial and Soviet history.

Palace in Petrograd and declared their sovereign power.[5] The year 1917 brought unprecedented social disruption to the lives of the Russian people, who transitioned from living under imperial power to living under Communist rule. It also inspired a wave of idealism, as revolutionaries and Bolshevik sympathizers imagined a new world order, in which the proletariat, now emancipated from the imperialist yoke, could enjoy social freedoms and power as never before.

Briusova's mass music education program was connected to this trend of revolutionary idealism, though it differed from the Bolshevik ideology in one important way: while Briusova sought to democratize musical knowledge for everyone, the Bolsheviks planned to proletarianize the education system. [6] For the Bolsheviks, education was the mechanism by which to elevate proletarian consciousness and build socialism. Therefore, Bolsheviks sought to proletarianize higher education by teaching exclusively working class student the proletarian sciences, e.g., classes on Marxism, historical determinism, proletarian-made art forms, etc. For Briusova, on the other hand, mass music education was about educating the *narod* and making music accessible to all.

This term *narod*, which translates to "folk" or "common people," plays an important role in this thesis. Unlike the Russian word for people (*liudi*), *narod* has a “romantic and emotive sense" and was connected to the idea of the Russian people as a nation. (*Narod* could also be used to refer to other nations. There was a Polish *narod*, a Ukrainian *narod*, etc.). In its original

[5] During the seizure of the Winter Palace, members of the Provisional Government hid in the Micah Room, which you can visit today in the State Hermitage, decorated as it was on that fateful day. Allegedly, no blood was split during the October Revolution, though the tsar’s family was later executed in Ekaterinburg in November.
[6] There are three relevant words that can translate to “education” in Russian: *obrazovanie* (neutral connotation), *vospitanie* (also means upbringing), and *prosveshchenie* (also means enlightenment and bears an association with paternalistic moral education).

use, *narod,* in a Russian context, referred to the peasantry.[7] The mid-19th century intelligentsia perceived the peasantry as heart of the *narod*, the truest embodiment of the Russian soul, because of their devotion to the land, to collective peasant communes, and to Russian Orthodoxy.[8] By the early-20th century, when Briusova was using the term, the word's meaning had broadened to include the entirety of the Russian populace, but it never lost its associations with the peasantry and Russianness. In a Soviet context, the word *narod* carried troublesome imperial and nationalistic connotations. In particular, its association with the idealization of the peasantry was an issue for the Bolsheviks, who distrusted the peasantry's conservatism and tsarist loyalties. While the Bolsheviks did occasionally use the word *narod* to refer broadly to the Russian populace, more often than not they preferred the class-identifying terms like workers, toilers, proletariats, or of course, comrades.[9]

As a result of the Bolsheviks' complicated relationship with the term *narod*, Briusova's use of the word offers a number of insights into her relationship with late-Imperial and Soviet politics. Briusova's dedication to educating the *narod* even after the Revolution connected her work with the late-Imperial concepts of the democratization of knowledge and the intelligentsia's paternalistic treatment of the uneducated.[10] Further, her use of the *narod* linked her mass music education program to the late-Imperial nationalistic cultural projects, which used Russian folk song (*narodnye pesnia*) as a basis for the creation of a national music. However, as time passed

[7] Briusova never uses the neutral term "*liudi*" to address the beneficiaries of mass music education. She refers to her students as either *narod*, or, in the Soviet period, the masses, the proletariats, the toilers, or the working classes. Pauline Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping the Soviet Musical Identity Under Lenin and Stalin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press Publications, 2016), 22.

[8] Veljko Vujačić, *Nationalism, Myth, and the State in Russia and Serbia: Antecedents of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 106-107.

[9] One example of a Soviet use of the word *narod* is Narkompros, the Soviet department of education, which is an abbreviation for *Narodnyi Kommissariat Prosveshcheniia* (The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment).

[10] Starting as early as the 1840s, the intelligentsia saw it as their solemn duty "to repay their debt to society by promoting the education and 'enlightenment' of the people [*narod*]." Nelson, 7.

after the Revolution, Briusova's vocabulary broadened to include the more Bolshevik-approved terms – proletariat, workers, and toilers – in order to signal her allegiance to the Party.

In this thesis, I argue that Nadezhda Briusova's work in mass music education, which straddled the late-Imperial and Soviet eras, serves as an example of continuity across the revolutionary divide. I show the ways in which Briusova held onto the central elements of her pre-Revolutionary work throughout her career, teaching many of the same classes, working with the same people, and emphasizing always the universal experience of listening to and understanding music. While the primary argument of this thesis is one of continuity, I complicate this stance by showing the ways in which Briusova did adapt her late-Imperial ideas to suit the demands of Bolshevik cultural politics. By investigating Briusova's nuanced use of the term *narod* as well as her attitude towards Russian cultural heritage before and after the Revolution, I demonstrate how Briusova's simple and versatile mass music education program at once perpetuated late-Imperial ideals of liberalism and cultural nationalism, while appeasing the political demands of the nominally anti-bourgeois, anti-nationalistic Soviet state.

Music was of course not the only field undergoing cultural remodeling in the new Soviet state. The disciplines of literature and theater also endured growing pains during the early stages of the new regime. Just like in music, the 1917 Revolution opened the floodgates for some aspects of cultural creativity and summarily shut the door for others. In the genres of literature and theater, Futurist art, which celebrated experimental innovation and abhorred cultural tradition, blossomed. Futurist poets such as Vladimir Mayakovsky spearheaded the Revolutionary movement in literature, famously calling for Russian writers Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy to be thrown off the "steamboat of modernity."[11] In a similar vein,

[11] Pauline Fairclough, 2.

all across Russia, amateur acting troupes, assembled with the help of the proletarian culture organization, Proletkult, put on revolutionary plays, in some cases engaging the rural masses in a theatrical endeavor for the first time.[12] However, just as in music, revolutionary fervor did not completely undermine the literary tradition. Much to Mayakovsky's dismay, literary giants such as Pushkin and Dostoevsky still found their way into the Soviet canon.[13]

In general, post-Revolutionary literary genres such as poetry, prose, theater, and film tended to be more radical and more explicitly Bolshevik than music. This is because music is invisible and abstract, making it difficult for Soviet censors to distinguish between revolutionary art and bourgeois riffraff. Whereas the literary arts had to tout the Party line, musicians were given the space to bring revolutionary thought into their work in their own time. As Amy Nelson describes it, "[The Soviet state's] combination of official neglect and respect for professional expertise meant that musicians were more successful than other artistic groups in promoting their own aesthetic platforms and regulating cultural production and consumption."[14] Music's hermeneutical inscrutability makes the study of mass music education's transition into the Soviet era particularly interesting. Unlike common narratives about the Communist regime, which often depict a top-down imposition of Soviet culture, studying music allows us to see the ways in which musicians, such as Briusova, interacted with and accepted the Revolution on their own terms.

[12] For more on theater in the Revolutionary years, see Lynn Mally, Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and Mally, Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938 (United States: 2000). See also William G. Rosenberg, "Introduction" in *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, edited by William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1984), 423-427.

[13] Pauline Fairclough explores the canonization of Russian and Western classics in a musical context in her book *Classics for the Masses*, drawing parallels between this process in the musical and literary fields.

[14] Nelson, 3.

One of the main goals of this thesis is to show how one woman impacted the development of Soviet music culture. The biggest names in Russian and Soviet music history are male: Ivan Glinka, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, etc. With women often categorically left out of the historical record, studying Briusova's work is my small contribution to the reshaping of musical historiography.[15] Briusova was one of only a handful of women who occupied influential positions related to music in late-Imperial and Soviet Russia. She was the sole female founder of the Moscow People's Conservatory, an institution which at its peak employed only one other woman, folk song collector Evgeniia Lineva. She was the only woman to occupy an influential position in Narkompros' music section.[16] Briusova also opened doors for future women to rise in the ranks, since each of the institutions she worked at – Moscow People's Conservatory, Shaniavskii University, and her private music school – admitted students regardless of gender.[17]

However, while Briusova did break stereotypes in some ways by asserting her power as an influential bureaucrat and pedagogue, in other ways, her work was limited by the social expectations of her gender. Her musical specialties – pedagogy (especially children's education), piano, folk song – were a traditional part of socially acceptable female music-making. As Julia Mannherz points out, both piano playing and the amateur performance of folk songs were

[15] Despite her influence and prolific writing, her personal *fond* in RGALI contains 229 files, just a quarter of her brother Valerii's 886. For more information, visit the archive's website: rgali.ru.

[16] Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 131-132.

[17] Briusova's private music school admitted students regardless of gender. See Programs, rules, and instructions of the music school of Nadezhda Briusova (1913), (RGALI) f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 13. Shaniavskii University also admitted students regardless of gender. See Academic plan, questionnaires, programs of courses and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova […] (1916-1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 14. Mass education was, in part, about educating both genders. According to Lee, women accounted for an impressive 56.7% of the student body at Shaniavskii People's University in 1910: David Currie Lee, "An Overview of the Origins and Development of People's Universities, 1896-1968" in *The People's Universities of the USSR* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 47.

associated with domesticity and the female sphere.[18] In regards to pedagogy, Nelson explains that, "Before the revolution, teaching was considered a fall-back option for failed performers and a money-making pastime for bourgeois women."[19] Nelson suggests that the class- and gender-based stigma against music teachers followed Briusova throughout her career. Regardless, Briusova had a remarkable impact on Soviet music culture, despite the socially prescribed limitations of her gender.

The only scholar to study Nadezhda Briusova's work in-depth is Natalia Nikolaevna Minor, who wrote her PhD dissertation on Briusova at the Saratovskii Pedagogical Institute in 1994. Minor's dissertation, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Mass Music Education* (1994), provides an outline of Briusova's life, a complete bibliography of her works, and several previously unpublished archival materials from Briusova's RGALI personal collection, *fond*.[20] Minor is not a historian, but rather a scholar of pedagogy, whose interest in Briusova's work stems from a desire to reinstitute some of her teaching practices in modern-day Russia. Minor describes in the foreword of her book, *N. I. Briusova – Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar* (2000), that contemporary Russian education fails to provide the younger generations with deep spiritual satisfaction and identifies Briusova's pedagogical model as an antidote to her country's growing cultural and musical apathy.[21] While Minor's work provides a wonderfully detailed biography of Briusova and explanation of her ideas, it tends towards hagiography, failing to address

[18] Julia Mannherz, "Nationalism, Imperialism and Cosmopolitanism in Russian Nineteenth-Century Provincial Amateur Music-Making," in *Slavonic & East European Review* 95, no. 2 (Apr 1, 2017): 299, 304.
[19] Nelson, 166.
[20] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education.*
[21] N. N. Minor, *N. I. Briusova: muzykant, pedagog, uchenyi [N. I. Briusova: Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar]* (Saratov: Saratovskii Pedagogical Institute, 2000), 3-4.

Briusova's Bolshevik-inclinations (which would be unpopular after the fall of the USSR in 1991) as well as some of the darker spots in her history.[22]

Generally speaking, Russian and Soviet historians, when addressing the year 1917, tend to position themselves in one of two camps: Revolution as rupture or Revolution as continuity. For historians who perceive the Revolution as a moment of rupture, the year 1917 serves as a "zero-hour" in Soviet history. Late-imperial histories cover events leading up to 1917, and Soviet histories start in 1917. This revolutionary divide prevents historians from addressing the ways in which late-Imperial culture influenced and shaped Soviet culture. The second camp of historians – those who perceive continuity across the revolutionary divide – seek to fill in this gap. One such historian, Pauline Fairclough, argues in her book *Classics for the Masses* (2016) that, "there was no Soviet culture" the day after the October Revolution. Instead, Soviet culture was *created* slowly, drawing in large part on remnants of the late-Imperial past. [23] This thesis contributes to this "continuity" historiography, by investigating the ways in which Briusova's mass music education program perpetuated late-Imperial liberalism and cultural nationalism into the Soviet era.

Inspiration for my historiographical stance on Revolution as continuity came from the 2019 issue of *The Slavonic and East European Review*, "1917 and Beyond: Continuity, Rupture and Memory in Russian Music." [24] In it, Fairclough invites other historians to contemplate through-lines between late-Imperial and Soviet music culture. One historian, Olga Pantaleeva,

[22] For example, Minor makes no mention of Briusova's active participation in the purging of students and faculty at the Moscow Conservatory in 1924. This, plus her lack of acknowledgement of Briusova's politics, may be a result of Minor's wish to market Briusova's pedagogical model to the Russian public. Minor also does not explore Briusova's personal life, never mentioning whether or not she ever married or had children. I can only assume she did not.

[23] Fairclough, 12.

[24] Philip Ross Bullock and Pauline Fairclough, "1917 and Beyond: Continuity, Rupture and Memory in Russian Music," in Slavonic & East European Review 97, no. 1 (Jan 1, 2019): 1-8.

offers a fascinating analysis on "How Soviet Musicology Became Marxist," making the argument that Marxism in music theory grew out of 19th-century ideologies such as positivism.[25] Pantaleeva's analysis of continuity across the revolutionary divide even involves an analysis of Nadezhda Briusova's work. In the third chapter of her PhD Dissertation, entitled "Positivism and the Danger of Science: Nadezhda Bryusova vs. Emiliy Medtner," Pantaleeva analyzes Briusova's controversial approach to musicology in late-Imperial years.[26]

Rebecca Mitchell's book, *Nietzsche's Orphans,* provides an analysis of the late-Imperial musical intelligentsia and their belief in the metaphysical powers of music to unify society in the years leading up to the October Revolution.[27] In this book, Mitchell makes frequent reference to Briusova, who she classifies as one of Nietzsche's Orphans, or a believer in musical metaphysics. Mitchell points to Briusova's syllabi, which feature Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and the Moscow People's Conservatory, which was founded with the express purpose of promoting collectivity through song, as evidence of Briusova's belief in musical metaphysics.[28] However, Mitchell's book only covers the years leading up to the 1917 Revolution. This thesis extends her theory of musical metaphysics into the Soviet age, investigating when and why Briusova drew on or abandoned her late-Imperial ideals concerning the unifying power of music.

This thesis joins a handful of other works dedicated to the study of the early years of Soviet music culture. While there is a broad body of scholarship on socialist realism in the 1930s, the de facto artistic doctrine of the Stalinist period, few works address the tumultuous and

[25] Olga Pantaleeva, "How Soviet Musicology Became Marxist" in The Slavonic and East European Review 97, no. 1 (2019): 73-109. Accessed April 6, 2020.
[26] Because this thesis focuses on pedagogy, Pantaleeva's work, which emphasizes Briusova's stance on music theories, will not be heavily cited. Panteleeva, Olga. "Formation of Russian Musicology from Sacchetti to Asafyev, 1885-1931." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015.
[27] Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans : Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.
[28] Ibid., 5, 55-59.

ideologically pluralistic 1920s. Amy Nelson, Neil Edmunds, and Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker are the exceptions. Frolova-Walker and Walker's chronology, *Music and Soviet Power* (2012), offers a summary of each year between the Bolshevik takeover in 1917 and the institution of socialist realism in 1932, as well as translated, previously unpublished archival documents relevant to the period.[29] Edmunds, in *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (2000), presents an institutional history of the musical organizations that trumpeted the Party line.[30] In contrast to Edmunds, in her book, *Music for the Revolution* (2004), Nelson depicts the complex relationship of music and politics in the 1920s, stressing the ideological pluralism of the time and providing a balanced history of the key players and organizations of the early Soviet music scene.[31] Since each of these books begin their histories in 1917, this thesis uses their conclusions about the early Soviet years to draw connections with the political and ideological setting of the late-Imperial age.

Briusova's music journal articles provide a substantial portion of the primary source material for this thesis. Over the course of her career, Briusova was published at least 50 times in 22 different journals.[32] She also wrote two books in the first decade after her graduation from Moscow Conservatory. These books, *The Science of Music: Its Historical Paths and Contemporary Status* (1909) and *Temporal and Spatial Construction of Form* (1911), written only a few years after Briusova's graduation from the Conservatory, demonstrate her bookish knowledge of music theory. The rest of her written work – pamphlets and music journal articles

[29] Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker, *Music and Soviet Power, 1917–1932* (Boydell & Brewer, 2012).
[30] Neil Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2000)
[31] Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).
[32] This is according to my own search for her articles, using N. N. Minor's bibliography of Briusova's completed works as a guide. However, given that Minor's bibliography was missing some articles, it is possible that I too am unaware of the full extent of Briusova's written work.

– are far more accessible, covering pedagogical subjects in plainspoken language. They form the basis of this study. Topics for these articles include children's music education, folk song, revolutionary music, mass song, and how to listen to music. Later in her career, Briusova began writing retrospectives on the early years of revolutionary musical work. Perhaps the most important article for this thesis is Briusova's 1947 retrospective on the first years of mass music education after the Revolution, which provides a detailed account of Briusova's mass musical endeavors as well as a surprisingly sinister outlook on her own post-Revolutionary idealism.[33]

In addition to these music journal articles, I collected unpublished materials from Briusova's personal *fond* in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI) in Moscow. Within my six short days at RGALI, I pored over approximately 1500 pages of handwritten (and often illegible) lecture notes, course syllabi, professional correspondence, establishing documents for Briusova's private music school, student questionnaires, minutes from Red Professors' Faction meetings, photos of Briusova and her students, and even the libretto of her children's opera "The Tsarina-Frog." My research focused on Briusova's most productive years of teaching, between 1906 (when she co-founded the Moscow People's Conservatory) and 1928 (after she resigned from her position as academic dean at the Conservatory). This chronological focus prevented me from going in-depth into Briusova's relationship with the events of the 1930s and 40s, e.g., the Stalinist Purges and WWII, though I hope to one day have the time and resources to dive more deeply into this period of her life.

This thesis is divided into three chapters, each tracing different forms of continuity and adaptation across the revolutionary divide in Briusova's mass music education programs. The

[33] N. I. Briusova, "Massovaia muzykal'no-prosvetitel'naia rabota v pervye gody posle Oktiabria (iz vospominanii) [Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)]" in *Sovetskaia muzyka* no. 6 (1947b): 46-65.

first chapter “Nadezhda Briusova: the *Matryoshka* of Mass Music Education,” provides biographical background information on our story’s heroine. Using Briusova’s life story as a way of understanding the development of her ideas, this chapter introduces the reader to the essentials of Briusova’s pedagogy and demonstrates that the greatest example of continuity in Briusova’s music education program was her own dedication to the emotional and collective power of music. The next chapter, “Who is the *Narod*?: Pedagogy and Politics in Briusova's Mass Music Education Program,” investigates Briusova's relationship with her students, the *narod*. By tearing apart the connotations of this troublesome term, I show how Briusova’s mass music education program perpetuated late-Imperial ideals into the Soviet era. And finally, in the third chapter, “Folk Song and Russian Classics: Cultural Nationalism in Briusova’s Pedagogy,” I investigate the music that Briusova wrote about and taught in her classes, showing how her love for Russian cultural heritage connected her mass music education program to the cultural nationalism projects of the late-Imperial era.

Chapter (1)

Nadezhda Briusova: The *Matryoshka* of Mass Music Education

> "Life is creativity (*tvorchestvo*). Everyone must learn how to create. In order to be spiritually healthy, a person must be able to naturally give birth to and nurture their own ideas and feelings... [Arts education] is not about aesthetics… This is an education in the most fundamental, deepest feelings in life, the very soil of life – an education of will, of the feeling of being, the vital will to live."[34]

In this 1918 article "For Art," Nadezhda Briusova uses poetic imagery to make a clear point: making art is human. "Life is creativity" – meaning, no part of the quotidian experience can be separated from creativity, because, in every seemingly trivial moment of the day, a human being experiences the world and reacts – creates – according to their own thoughts and feelings. Those thoughts and feelings, their creation, are the very substance of life. According to Briusova, the goal of an arts education is not to produce artists who are well-versed in technique and aesthetic debates, but to give ordinary people the tools to create mindfully. As she says later in the same article, "It is not the technical side of art that should be developed in these classes, but the creative – the skill of creating and the skill of understanding creation."[35]

In this chapter, I sample Briusova's writing, her journal articles, handwritten lecture notes, and public speeches in order to examine her ideas about music and pedagogy. Using her biography as a lens through which to understand her ideas, I show that Briusova's core conviction – her belief that arts education, and especially music education, begets more creative, mindful, and emotional people – remained a driving force in her pedagogy throughout her career, whether she was working for the late-Imperial *narod* or the Soviet proletariat. In this way, Briusova was like a *matryoshka*, a Russian nesting doll. In the post-Revolutionary setting, she

[34] N. I. Briusova, "*Za Iskusstvo* [For Art]," *Novaia shkola* 4 (1918b): 194.
[35] Ibid.

adopted Bolshevik language and Soviet ideals, but nestled within this Party lingo was an innermost doll, a core belief in the collective power of music that never left her.

1 - Briusova's upbringing and early influences

Briusova was born on November 8, 1881 in Moscow.[36] The daughter of Iakov Kuz'mich and Matrena Aleksandrova, Briusova was the third of six children: Valerii, Nikolai, Nadezhda, Evgeniia, Lydia, and Alexander. Despite the peasant origins of both of Briusova's grandparents, everyone in her immediate family could read (a remarkable fact given that the literacy rate in Russia the late-19th century was as low as 21.2%).[37] At this time, especially for families of peasant descent, gaining literacy was an essential component of social mobility, a portal to higher moral and cultural education.[38] Briusova's father, a merchant, so greatly valued learning and literacy that he paid for his wife's education after their marriage. He also self-published his own handwritten magazine called "Freedom." An atheistic *intelligentsia* family, the Briusovs shared their father's love for literature, poetry, and the arts. In fact, four of the six children went on to artistic careers. Valerii became a famous Symbolist poet, Nadezhda a pianist and mass music educator, Evgeniia a pianist and instructor at the Moscow Conservatory, and Alexander a poet and an archeology professor at Moscow State University.[39]

Homeschooled by her older brother Valerii, Briusova's early education took the shape of intellectual debates and family discussions. She remembers fondly a typical day studying with Valerii, when they would "sit in a hall decorated with flowers. Valerii would walk back and forth

[36] This date is given in the old style. Russians didn't adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1918. Her birthday is November 20 in the new style.
[37] David Currie Lee, *The People's Universities of the USSR* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1998), 28.
[38] Jeffrey Brooks, "Uses of Literacy" in When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917 (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1985).
[39] N. N. Minor, *N. I. Briusova: Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar*, 6-7. Valerii Briusov was one of the founders of Russian Symbolism, an artistic movement celebrated mysticism and irrationalism.

across the room heatedly talking to me about history."[40] The family would engage in boisterous conversation after attending evening concerts, and young Nadezhda would reel off everything she noticed about the orchestra or the singer from her seat in the audience.[41] As a result of Briusova's unique home environment, which encouraged a critical engagement with the arts from an early age, conversation-based pedagogy and an early socialization to music became central elements of her pedagogical career. This can be seen in her *slushanie muzyki*, or "listening to music," courses, which taught students of all ages to listen closely to a piece and practice talking about what they heard and how it made them feel.

At age 14, Briusova enrolled at the Moscow Conservatory and began studying with composer and music theorist Sergei Taneev (1856-1916), a man whose pedagogy complemented Briusova's preference for discussion-based and holistic learning.[42] As Briusova describes in an article written after his death, Taneev was an attentive and compassionate teacher, "As a teacher, as a creative director, Taneev calmly and intently studied the creative labor of his students, assuredly clarifying the elements of their creative work."[43] As another student put it, "The basic task of Taneev as a composer and teacher was to reveal the constructive principles that organize musical thinking. Musicality and thinking were the two basic demands that Taneev made on a musician."[44] Like Valerii, Taneev engaged his students in meaningful discussions about their work, and through these discussions helped them to clarify their own ideas about music and

[40] Minor, *N. I. Briusova - Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar*, 8. [Author's translation].
[41] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 7.
[42] "The Moscow Conservatory offered all levels of musical education, from beginning instruction for children in ear training and playing instruments to advanced training in composition and performance at the "university" level. Briusova experienced both the pre- and professional tracks at Moscow Conservatory. Nelson, 137-138.
[43] N. I. Briusova, "*Muzykal'noe tvorchestvo S. I. Taneeva* [Musical Creation of Sergei Taneev]," *Muzykal'nyi Covremennik* 8 (1916): 89. [Author's translation].
[44] This student is Sergei Protopopov. Gordon D. McQuere, "The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky" in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, ed. by Gordon D. McQuere, (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1983), 111. [McQuere's translation].

composition.[45] His primary goal was to create musical thinkers, not just musicians – a sentiment that guided Briusova in her design of amateur music classes later in her career.[46]

Taneev also encouraged a holistic approach to studying music, teaching his students that the best way to understand a piece of music was through performance. At Taneev's urging, Briusova and her fellow music theory classmates participated in various productions of classic operas, including Tchaikovsky's *Evgenii Onegin* and Beethoven's famously underwhelming *Fidelio.*[47] Taneev's emphasis on performance, particularly vocal performance, as the best way to learn the inner workings of music had a lasting influence on Briusova's pedagogy. She learned from him that singing – something anyone can do – is an easy and accessible approach to teaching musical fundamentals and classical pieces. As will be discussed later in this chapter, in homage to Taneev, Briusova had the students in her private music school collectively compose and perform their own children's operas in order to learn musical language from the inside out.

Briusova's commitment to making music more accessible extended beyond the classroom. While studying at the Moscow Conservatory, she dipped her toes in the waters of social activism. From 1901-1904, she ran an illegal mutual-assistance box office (*kassa*) that offered free concert tickets to needy students.[48] Minor identifies working at the *kassa* as Briusova's "first experience participating in such social activism, a completely new and fascinating thing, which developed her character as a music-social activist."[49] Increasing public

[45] Minor, *N. I. Briusova - Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar*, 9.
[46] See for instance, Briusova's "How to work with choir" class. In it, Briusova emphasizes that the goal of the class is not necessarily to make students musicians, but to make students musical. Academic plan, questionnaires, programs of courses and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova […] (1916-1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 14. [Author's translation].
[47] I say "famously underwhelming" because Beethoven, while lauded for his contribution to quartet and symphonic repertoire, was no great operatic composer. *Fidelio* was his one failed opera. Minor, *N. I. Briusova - Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar*, 10.
[48] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 9.
[49] Ibid., 9. [Author's translation].

access to professional music concerts remained a priority for Briusova throughout her career. She went on to organize free concerts and lecture series at the Moscow People's Conservatory, as the leader of the Moscow Soviet Music Commission, and as a Red Professor at the Moscow Conservatory.

Working alongside Briusova at the *kassa* was Boleslav Iavorskii (1877-1942), a fellow conservatory student who shared Briusova's passion for making music accessible to the masses.[50] Born in Ukraine, Iavorskii came to Moscow at age 21 to study music theory with Taneev. Like Briusova, everything Iavorskii did was connected to his belief in the creative and emotional power of music. Using language reminiscent of Briusova's own, he writes in the opening of his seminal work, *The Structure of Musical Speech*, "Musical speech … is the appearance of this very life, the life all around us."[51] As Minor contends, Briusova and Iavorskii were *edinomyshchlenie*, literally "of the same mind."[52] Working together throughout their careers, Briusova and Iavorskii rose to prominent positions in the field of mass music education, always rooting their work in the same conviction that had guided their early days at the *kassa*: a shared desire to make music accessible and meaningful to the masses. Their ideas – *slushanie muzyki* classes, the music theory of modal rhythm, and approaches to musical pedagogy for children – became seminal parts of Soviet music education.[53]

[50] Ibid., 119.

[51] Briusova pulls this quote from Iavorskii's book in her obituary of her dear friend. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 119. [Author's translation]. For more on Iarovskii's theory of modal rhythm, see Gordon D. McQuere, "The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky," in Gordon D. McQuere, ed, *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1983), 109-164; Amy Nelson, "Assigning Meaning to 'Musical Speech:' The Theories of Boleslav Iavorsky in the Cultural Revolution," in Andrew Wachtel, ed., *Intersections and Transpositions: Russian Music, Literature,, and Society* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 253-273.

[52] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 31.

[53] For more on Briusova and Iavorskii's collective work, see Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 23, 32; and Article by Briusova "Boleslav Leopol'dovich Iavorskii" (1945), RGALI f. 2009 op. 1 ed. kh. 125 in Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 116-126.

2 - Becoming a teacher: Briusova at Moscow People's Conservatory, Her Private Music School, and Shaniavskii University

After graduating from the Moscow Conservatory in 1904 with degrees in music theory and piano performance, Briusova began her life as an educator. In her first year after graduation, she focused on writing, publishing three articles for the music journal *Vesy* under the pseudonym Sunanda.[54] She gave private piano lessons and, from August 1905 to June 1906, taught piano and *slushanie muzyki* classes to children at the Iaroslavskii music school.[55] Briusova did not write much about these early days of teaching, presumably because they paled in comparison to what came next.

In 1905, revolution ripped through Russia. Though revolutionary fervor had been brewing for generations, it was Russia's disastrous performance in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) that incited social upheaval. Inspired by the French Revolution, the Russian intelligentsia dreamt of bringing democratic principles to Russia, establishing a State Duma and limiting tsarist power. Meanwhile, peasants, liberated from serfdom in 1861, wanted to be awarded land allotments that met their needs, and the relatively small industrial working class sought better wages and labor protections. Social unrest, including massive protest and strikes, erupted across the country. But ultimately, these three groups – the intelligentsia, the peasants, and the working classes – could not unify behind one cause. While the 1905 Revolution did yield productive results, namely the establishment of the State Duma and the Russian Constitution of

[54] It is unclear to me why she would have written using a pseudonym, given that she used her real name for every one of her later journal articles. I looked for these articles, cited in Minor's books, in the Lenin Library, but was unable to access them. Article titles include: "*Nal' i Damainti,"* "Biographies of composers from from 1800 - 1900," "Music in Moscow."

[55] The Iaroslavskii Music School was a *uchilishche*, or specialized secondary school.

1906, its primary consequence was to reveal deep divisions within Russian society, specifically between the intelligentsia and the *narod*.[56]

In response to the 1905 Revolution, Briusova, Iavorskii, Taneev, and Briusova's piano professor Konstantin Igumnov founded the Moscow People's Conservatory (MPC) in 1906.[57] Believing that the spread of musical knowledge could unite Russian society, the MPC created a forum for the musical intelligentsia to share their skills and knowledge with the *narod*. Classes, which primarily emphasized folk song and Russian classics in their curricula, were designed to connect the intelligentsia and the *narod* to each other through their shared cultural heritage. Choral singing was an especially important component of MPC's curricula, because Briusova and her fellow founders believed that singing in large groups cultivated unity in collectivity (*sobornost'*) and created a collective consciousness that connected singers to their cultural heritage in the most direct way possible.[58] The MPC, as described by Briusova, sought "to give its students a general music education, to teach them to understand music, and to acquaint them with the best of musical creation and music history."[59] In its first year, the MPC accepted 2000 applications and enrolled 627 students.[60] The MPC offered group classes, including choir, music theory, folk song, solo singing, and Briusova's own *slushanie muzyki* course, as well as specialist

[56] Jane Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917-1922* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 8.

[57] N. N. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 9. Many historians point out the relationship between the 1905 Revolution and the founding of the People's Conservatory. Mitchell, 54-57; Amy Nelson, Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 7.

[58] The term *sobornost'*, which Mitchell defines as unity in collectivity, comes from the word *sobor*, or cathedral, lending the term a spiritual, quasi-religious connotation.

[59] N. I. Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 47. [Author's translation].

[60] Minor claims that in the first months of the Conservatory's operation, 2000 hopefuls applied for enrollment. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 10. Mitchell documents that 627 students were enrolled. Mitchell, 55.

classes, such as vocal and instrumental lessons, music composition, and music theory for advanced students.[61]

At the MPC, Briusova sought to make it easier for ordinary people to hear, play, and talk about great works of art. However, not everyone on faculty agreed on these fundamental goals. As Briusova recalls, "since the very beginning of [the MPC's] existence, a group [of faculty] led a covert fight to increase the number of solo classes, decrease the number of choral classes, reject the work on the outer edges of Moscow, in so doing, practically, rejecting all of the MPC's ground-breaking innovations."[62] After ten years of ideological in-fighting, the conservative group prevailed. In 1916, the faculty voted to cease mass music education pursuits and limit the rate of admittance to raise the school's level of prestige. Briusova, unable to stomach the institution's unconscionable shift in values, resigned, along with two other founding members of the MPC, Igumnov and Iavorskii.[63]

From 1907-1917, while she was working at the MPC, Briusova also opened up her own private music school, which had many of the same pedagogical goals of the MPC. It sought to provide high-quality amateur music education to the *narod* and use music as a tool for collective thought. The primary difference between the private music school and the MPC was the student demographic. At her private music school, Briusova worked with 10-15 students from ages 5 to 15. In comparison with the MPC which primarily targeted adult amateur students, this younger demographic provided Briusova the opportunity to socialize young listeners to Russian music at

[61] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 10. It also served as a music library, publishing house, and a venue for free public concerts. Following Moscow's example, other People's Conservatories opened up across Russia in St. Petersburg, Saratov, Kazan, though these conservatories only offered concerts and lecture series, and not a robust course offerings. Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 48.

[62] Ibid. [Author's translation].

[63] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 48; Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 11.

an early age. Students sang in choir, studied music theory, and listened to and composed their own music. In addition to traditional music class offerings, the school offered courses which would serve the whole musician, including classes on the dramatic and figurative arts, painting and sculpting, spoken word, literature, poetry, oratory, history of literature, foreign languages, and the anatomy of organs necessary for sound production.[64]

A central element of the experience at Briusova's private music school was the yearly production of a children's opera. Having taught her students how to sing, listen to music, and compose short melodies, Briusova, ingeniously, had her students combine their newfound skills to collectively compose an opera. Using the story of a familiar folk tale, such as the Princess-Frog, the Wolf and the Goatlings, and the Fish and the Fisherman, Briusova had her students pick a character or a line of the libretto that they wanted to bring to life with music.[65] After listening to their neighbor's musical contribution, the student would write the next set of notes and rhythms, and Briusova would link each individual composition (172 in all) to create a full opera that the children would then perform.[66]

As Briusova writes, in a 1929 article entitled "Children's Musical Creation," teaching children music at her private music school was not about producing the next generation of prodigy composers. Rather, it was about acquainting children with musical language to "preserve their natural skill for music and give it the freedom to develop."[67] She argues that children learn music much the same way that they learn to read, speak, and draw – through imitation. Therefore, at the beginning of a child's artistic education, it was most important to feed their

[64] Programs, rules [ustav], and instructions of the music school of Nadezhda Briusova (1913), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 13.
[65] Yes, there are two Kolyas and two Tanyas. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 34.
[66] Ibid., 32. For photos of the children's opera productions, see the appendix.
[67] Briusova, "Detskoe muzykal'noe tvorchestvo [Child Music Composition]," Iskusstvo no. 6 (1929): 43. [Author's translation].

natural musical perceptions by teaching them to listen to, play, and imitate the melodies they hear. The purpose of having children collectively compose their own opera was not to create a great work of art, but rather to use the opera composition process as an opportunity for young students to practice using their new musical language.[68] Moreover, the performance and composition of children's operas linked directly to Briusova's pedagogical goal of using music to promote collectivity. As Briusova writes, on a symbolic level, opera represents collectivity because it unites music and poetry with physical action, synthesizing three art forms into one coherent whole.[69] Moreover, the act of writing collectively, stitching together students' short melodies into one tapestry, encouraged students to work together and create something with a single unified vision.

In January 1917, Briusova was asked to deliver lectures at the Shaniavskii University, an opportunity which allowed her to reassert her commitment to mass music education after resigning from the MPC. Like the MPC and its parent organization the Moscow Society of People's University, the Shaniavskii University opened its doors in response to the 1905 Revolution. It offered free university-level courses in all subjects for students of all professional and educational backgrounds.[70] The arts lecture cycles covered a wide range of subjects, including: music history, individual musical epochs, individual composers, Russian folk song,

[68] Briusova, " Child Music Composition," 43. [Author's translation].
[69] Drawn from Briusova's undated Lecture No. 4 and No. 5 in Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 82.
[70] Lee, 45. The University boasted an enrollment of 56.7% and 46.3% men. Students had the option to take one general course for 50 rubles or one general course and one specialized course for 75 rubles. General classes happened in the evening hours, so that workers could more easily fit them into their schedule, while some specialized classes met during the day. Academic plan, questionnaires, programs of courses and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova […] (1916-1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 14, l. 1.

and general themes such as the cultural tasks of music, instrumental and vocal music, and onomatopoeia in music.[71]

In the May through July 1917 lecture cycle "The Questions of Artistic Education," Briusova taught three courses, "Artistic Reception of Music," "How to work with choir," and "How to teach *slushanie muzyki.*"[72] In the latter two classes, Briusova focused her energies on teaching the next generation of mass music educators. In her "How to work with choir" course, Briusova taught her students, who were training to become choral directors, the best ways to energize young singers and pick appropriate repertoire for the group.[73] She made clear to these future teachers that the purpose of directing choir was not to turn every choral singer into a bonafide professional musician, but rather "to make students musical."[74] For Briusova, choir was an important pedagogical tool, which taught singers how to sing and how to listen, and by extension, how to be mindful and attentive members of society.

In her "How to teach *slushanie muzyki*" course, Briusova shared the secrets of her trademark class. She began by explaining that there are two stages of listening, "hearing" and "artistic perception." Once students moved past the stage of simply hearing music, they could begin developing their ear for artistry. The goal of an intermediate-level *slushanie muzyki* course was "to teach students how to listen to individual voices, to follow their development, identify themes, establish independent musical phrases, in a word, to develop the aural consciousness of

[71] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 48. [Author's translation].
[72] Academic plan, questionnaires, programs of courses and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova […] (1916-1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 14. [Author's translation].
[73] Ibid.
[74] This is reminiscent of Taneev's approach to cultivating "musical thinking." Ibid. [Author's translation].

students."[75] In such a class, Briusova recommended that the teacher play a piece (typically a piece of piano music written by a Russian composer) and engage the students in discussion of movement, character, narrative, and emotion.[76]

Working at Shaniavskii University reconnected Briusova with her enthusiasm for mass music education. She wrote pages and pages of lecture notes while working at the University. Sitting in the reading room of RGALI, trying to decipher Briusova's nearly illegible scribbling, it was easy for me to imagine the energy and excitement with which she wrote down her ideas. On one of the more legible pages, Briusova wrote this about what why music matters:

> We live in the many sounding voices of the world. When we feel deeply and strongly, we hear by those voices a reflection of our feelings. Music transmits all of these voices by our musical voices. In this way music is a simple reflection of our feelings, our internal life. Every piece of music transmits some kind of experience of this internal world, we discuss it simply and clearly, as if we could talk about it with simple and understandable words.[77]

This page struck me. Not only for its eloquence, but because of the date in the left-hand corner. Briusova wrote these words in the Spring of 1918, just months after the October Revolution. Even after the earth-shattering events of Revolution, with the Civil War (1917–1922) beginning to take over her country, Briusova wrote about music the same way she always had. Without an ounce of political rhetoric in her language, she wrote about the universal experience of music, and expressed her true and honest conviction that music has power when you talk about it, the same way she had done for the last 14 years as a mass music educator. As we shall see in the next section, the Revolution ultimately did change the way Briusova wrote about music. She

[75] Programs of study and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova for choral singing and listening to music in public education schools and questionnaires of listeners with responses about their knowledge of music (1917) RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 17, l. 2. [Author's translation].
[76] Ibid.
[77] Lecture notes at the Shaniavskii University (Spring 1918), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 82, l. 295. [Author's translation].

altered the way she taught certain classes, adopted a more proletarian-centric framework, and adapted new goals to suit her political environment. But even still, Soviet politics never unseated her belief in the social power of music to produce more creative and emotional listeners.

3 - Concertizing and Party Organizing: Narkompros and Proletkult

Inspired by the revolutionary events of 1917, Briusova began participating in local government. Though not a card-carrying Bolshevik, Briusova sympathized with the revolutionary cause and the plight of the worker, who was after all, a member of her beloved *narod*. After the February Revolution, she joined the music section of the Moscow Soviet, but she almost immediately resigned after "the clearly shoddy (*khalturnyi*) direction of the section forced her to quickly leave it."[78] Following the October Revolution, she rejoined the Moscow Soviet's Music Section as its chairperson.[79] In this role, her primary focus was organizing concert-lecture series for workers. In December, she put on a four-part concert-lecture series with the following themes: "Folk Songs," "Our Classics," "The School of the Mighty Handful," and "Tchaikovsky and his Followers." In contrast to the Section's work in February, Briusova remembered these performances, which began each night with a rendition of "The Internationale," as a triumph of revolutionary spirit, even though three quarters of the program celebrated the Russian bourgeois musical tradition.

In addition to working at the Moscow Soviet, starting in 1918, Briusova held positions at the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) and Proletkult (Proletarian Organizations for Cultural Enlightenment). Narkompros, the Soviet equivalent of the previous regime's department of education, was founded days after the Revolution and opened up music,

[78] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 12.
[79] Ibid.

theater, and literature subsections in July of 1918. Proletkult was a non-governmental body, which was founded on the eve of the Revolution to promote the development of proletarian culture. Though nominally autonomous of state control, Proletkult was ultimately funded (and later overshadowed) by Narkompros.[80] Narkompros and Proletkult promoted the same kinds of programs – organizing amateur ensembles for working-class people, presenting public music classes, opening new music schools, training future mass music education teachers, and performing free-admission concert-lecture series – but the institutions differed in mission and scope.[81] While Narkompros, as a state organ, had a duty to serve the entire Russian populace, the *narod*, Proletkult's sole focus was on supporting the creative output of the proletariat. At Narkompros, Briusova ran the General Music Education subsection (*obshchee muzykal'noe obrazovanie,* OMO) under the umbrella of the Music Section (MUZO). At Proletkult, Briusova worked in the Music Section (also abbreviated MUZO) and participated in nationwide conferences which sought to determine the future of proletarian music. In these positions, Briusova was able to shape Soviet music culture and music education from the ground up. However, as we shall see in later chapters, that influence came at the cost of the politicization of her work.

Looking back on these early years in her 1947 retrospective on mass-music education work after the October Revolution, Briusova wrote excitedly about her work at Narkompros's OMO. According to Briusova, OMO served the working class by diversifying the content and location of mass music education programs. As Briusova notes, OMO's work was an extension of the mass music education mission of Moscow People's Conservatory (in fact some graduates from MPC worked alongside Briusova at OMO), with one important distinction: OMO was not a

[80] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 9.
[81] Ibid.

conservatory. Abandoning all the connotations of elitism and pedigree that came with the conservatory label, OMO brought music to the people in every way possible – in the form of music publications, concerts, lecture circuits taking place in accessible venues such as workers' clubs, newly opened musical circles, studios, and music schools. Briusova praised OMO's unorthodox approach to music education for successfully reaching "a mass of ordinary musical workers" and bringing them into the work of mass music education.[82]

In November, 1918, OMO began training workers with musical backgrounds to become music educators. These free classes, 2.5 to 5.75 hours in length, took place over a six-month period at the People's Choir Academy, near the Moscow Conservatory. Over their course of study, students learned how to manage people's orchestras, organize folk concerts, and teach their students to listen to and experience musical feeling. Students absorbed new methods of music education, completely separate from the specialized music education models of the past, more accepting of all ranges of abilities, less dependent on musical virtuosity. Upon completion of the course, the newly minted mass music educators would move on to teach at other educational institutions, where they could share their musical knowledge with the *narod*.[83]

In addition to working at the Moscow Soviet, Narkompros, and Proletkult, Briusova continued teaching at Shaniavskii University after the Revolution. In 1919, Narkompros opened up its own People's Music School, modeled after the pre-Revolutionary Moscow People's Conservatory (MPC), using Shaniavskii University's facilities. Briusova, with all of her mass-music education expertise, served as the new music school's most prestigious faculty member.

[82] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 51.
[83] "Podotdel obshchego muzykal'nogo obrazovaniia muzykal'nogo otdela Narkomprosa [The subdepartment of public music education in the music section of Narkompros]" in Stepanova, Svetlana Romanova, ed. *Muzykal'naia zhizn' Moskvy v pervye gody posle Oktiabria. Oktiabr' 1917–1920. Khonika. Dokumenty. Materialy. [Musical Life of Moscow in the First Years After October. October 1917–1920. Chronicles. Documents. Materials]* (Moscow: The Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture, 1972), 236-238.

The school's mission, as laid out in the newspaper *Izvestiia*, mirrored many of the MPC's foundational goals:

> The goal of the school is to give music education to all who are interested in music, not as a specialty, but to develop more completely the general musical feeling, to all who feel a gap in their upbringing, due to the imperfect staging of musical activities in the pre-existing lower and middle academic institutions, and to all who love and are interested in music and wish to study how to listen to and understand it.[84]

Just like the MPC and the pre-1919 Shaniavskii University, the Shaniavskii People's Music School was intended to provide a broad musical education for non-specialists, cultivating a natural love for music among its students. Like the mass-music institutions that came before it, the People's Music School offered courses on general music education, *slushanie muzyki*, folk song, piano, and choral singing, and playing the violin.[85]

What united Briusova's work at this time was her intense optimism and her belief in the emotional power of music. Working at idealistic institutions like OMO and Proletkult, teaching *slushanie muzyki* courses at Shaniavskii University, Briusova's work was rife with ambition and a desire to make real change. But her heretofore boundless optimism did not stand the test of time. Looking back on these early days of mass music education work, Briusova wrote in 1947 that institutions like the OMO were conceived out of "mostly naivety and not only naivety, but also obsolete idealism."[86] Programs like the teacher training programs failed to adequately prepare graduates for the demands of teaching of the masses, and the members of the OMO, hopelessly understaffed, struggled to turn their ideas about mass music education, scribbled down on leaflets, brochures, and pamphlets, into applied methods in real classrooms.[87] In these

[84] Stepanova, ed., 126. [Author's translation].
[85] Briusova taught three of those six classes: general music education, *slushanie muzyki*, and piano. Ibid.
[86] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 52.
[87] Ibid., 54.

early years, from 1917–1922, Briusova was not yet weighed down by retrospection and regrets. She knew only hope and ambition. But all that was about to change; she was about to start working for the Moscow Conservatory.

4 - Homecoming: Teaching at Moscow Conservatory

In the fall of 1921, Briusova accepted the positions of professor of theory and folklore at the Moscow Conservatory. Working at her alma mater created a number of challenges for Briusova. First and foremost, it meant that she was serving two masters: the Conservatory and the Party. The Moscow Conservatory, unsurprisingly, was a conservative institution. Fearful of losing its pre-Revolutionary international reputation as a powerhouse of musical talent, the Moscow Conservatory resisted "Sovietization." Careful to maintain her reputation as a loyal Party sympathizer and government employee, Briusova tried to distance herself from the conservative politics of the Conservatory. This proved difficult though because, as a Conservatory professor, Briusova was firmly entrenched in the world of professional music education, far removed from mass music education pursuits that better reflected revolutionary thinking. From her administrative and professorial positions, Briusova had to work harder to attend to the needs of the masses and show her Red intentions.

Making matters more complicated, during the New Economic Period (NEP), Narkompros underwent restructuring, which had resulted in the production of a number of redundant departments, whose views on the role of the arts in Soviet society differed amongst themselves on a case-by-case basis.[88] Without a standardized state policy on the arts, Briusova often had no Party line to follow, making a show of Party loyalty difficult. While she successfully managed to

[88] Nelson, 125-137. The re-organization of Narkompros was preciptated by a loss of funds, caused by the NEP's privitization of previously nationalized arts organizations. Frolova-Walker and Walker, 37, 69.

serve her two masters – the Conservatory and the Party – in the early 1920s, her luck changed by the end of the decade, culminating in her resignation from her position as pedagogical dean in 1927, academic dean in 1928, and from her post at Narkompros in 1929.

In 1922, Narkompros mandated that the Moscow Conservatory "typify," i.e., become more like other institutions of higher learning (*VUZy*), by removing all amateur elements from its academic plan. This was the first occasion in which Briusova had to choose between the Conservatory and the Party. Since its inception, the Moscow Conservatory, unlike other *VUZy* taught students of varying ages and skill levels. While it had a pre-professional track for exceptional musicians and composers, it also administered programs for young children and intermediate musicians. Briusova strongly opposed Narkompros' *tipizatsiia* order, arguing that the unification of all three Conservatory divisions – a lower school for children, a music technicum for amateurs, and the pre-professional Conservatory – was crucial to the social and academic fabric of the institution. Briusova pointed out that separating the three divisions would damage mass music education efforts, because outreach programs, pedagogy classes, and large ensemble classes – centerpieces of the mass music education program – would not be able to function without student participation from all three divisions.[89] Bolstered by the support of her Conservatory colleagues, Briusova ultimately staved off *tipizatsiia*, but this victory came at a price. In order to save the Conservatory from internal division, she had to risk her relationship with Narkompros, as well as reject the *tipizatsiia* plan drafted by her long-time friend, Boleslav Iavorskii.

While in the *tipizatsiia* affair Briusova supported the preservation of the Conservatory, two years later, she demonstrated her allegiance to Party politics. In 1924, the Conservatory

[89] Nelson, 139-141.

expelled 1/3 of its faculty and 1/3 of its student body. While the expulsions were induced by state budgetary constraints, they were often misconstrued as the political purging of the Stalin's enemies, the Trotskyites.[90] Briusova, in her capacity as a Red Professor at the Conservatory, drafted a list of 57 proposed faculty dismissals, accusing professors of ideological misalignment or inadequate pedagogical skills.[91] She presented these proposals before a board of Glavprofobr members, headed by Iavorskii. The Glavprofobr committee then passed on their recommendations to the GUS music subsection, whose members included, amongst others, Iavorskii and Briusova herself.[92] Empowered by the Conservatory and the State to bookend the purging process, Briusova ignored the dissenting opinions of other influential people like the head of the Conservatory, Alexander Goldenwieser and faculty composer, Nikolai Miaskovskii, who both resigned in reaction to these unwarranted purges.[93] This purging process won Briusova no favors. After members of the faculty tried and failed to oust her, Briusova wielded considerably less power within Conservatory circles.[94]

Briusova's motivations for the purges are unclear. It is possible that she saw the purges as a genuine opportunity to increase representation of proletarian backgrounds in the Conservatory, though it is also possible that, for her, the purges may have been personally motivated. Historically, the label "Trotskyite" was more closely connected to personal vendettas than substantive, ideological disagreement. Briusova may also have been seeking political cover. Working at a conservative institution and no longer directly serving the proletarian masses as a

[90] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 69, 111-112.
[91] Nelson, 142-143. Briusova received recommendations for dismissals from student groups.
[92] In truth, all influential music-related positions in Narkompros were held between a collective of only eight people. Ibid., 128.
[93] Ibid., 144-145.
[94] Interestingly, while Briusova's biographer, Natalia Minor mentions the *tipizatsiia* affair, she neglects to mention this purging process, an incontrovertible stain on Briusova's record as a champion of music for all. For more on the purging of students and faculty, see Nelson, 141-149.

mass music educator, Briusova may well have been aware that if she did not ostentatiously demonstrate her Party allegiances by conducting a purge, she herself could be let go.

Briusova's allegiance to the Left began when she joined RAPM (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians) and co-founded the Red Professor's Faction in 1923. RAPM, the musical equivalent of the more popular RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), sought to cultivate the taste of the "toilers," applying Marxist theory to the development of proletarian musical consciousness. RAPM's ideological platform, published in *Musical Virgin Soil* in 1924, reads like a Marxist adaptation of Briusova's ideas on the emotional power of music:

> The goal of art is to modify the human psyche through the emotional, subconscious part of the human being. Every class imprints its art with its world-vision, its mores. Thus, by organizing consciousness in a particular way, art is a mighty weapon for disseminating the influence of a particular class.[95]

As an RAPM member, Briusova wrote a number of articles for *Musical Virgin Soil*, *Proletarian Musician*, and *For Proletarian Music*, preaching her opinions on the best approaches to proletarian musical education.[96]

Taking its cue from RAPM, the Red Professors' Faction, a group of "revolutionary-minded" teachers who worked closely with GUS, Glavprofobr, and Rabis (Artists' Workers Union), sought to bring about structural and curricular change within the Moscow Conservatory in order to benefit current and prospective students of proletarian or peasant backgrounds.[97] In the Faction's first declaration of intent, they listed the following goals:

> [To] promote the social-political education of students, create a program and method for education on the basis of principles for the training of a musician who has complete understanding of contemporary affairs and is closely suited to the

[95] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 128. [Frolova-Walker and Walker's translation].
[96] Edmunds, 17.
[97] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 118. Translation of the Red Professors' Faction's introductory announcement, "A Statement by a Group of Moscow State Conservatoire Professors," originally published in *Muzykal'naia Nov'.*

> needs of the masses, [...] [and] advance the proletarianization of the student population.[98]

Briusova was the Red Professors' Faction's chairperson and most active member. The Red Professors' Faction's obsession with addressing proletarian and peasant needs resulted in a wide range of actions, including: the reevaluation of examination practices, close affiliation with Communist student groups, the promotion of mass music education work in local communities, and faculty purges.[99] The Red Professors' Faction was abolished in 1928, much to Briusova's dismay, due to its propensity to start quarrels between professors.[100]

In 1924, Briusova became the dean of the pedagogical faculty, *pedfak*, a position which further demonstrated her commitment to the proletarianization of the Conservatory and the Left. Established in 1921, *pedfak* was created in order to improve on Narkompros's teacher training program and produce more and better mass music educators. Enrolling the highest percentage of students from proletarian and peasant backgrounds of any Conservatory department, *pedfak* exemplified the Red Professors' Faction of a more diverse conservatory student body.[101] However, not everyone at the Conservatory was impressed by *pedfak*. Goldenweiser, possibly retaliating against Briusova for the 1924 purges, led an attack on the department, declaring it to be an embarrassment to the Conservatory's standard of excellence. Briusova resigned as pedagogical dean in 1927.[102]

[98] Edmunds, 92.

[99] Memos of Briusova about the state of the Moscow State Conservatory, resolutions of the commission for examination of instructor-pedagogues of the faculty, notes from the protocols of the interfaculty music-theory commission of the conservatory about the settings in the areas of music theory, etc. (1923-1928), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 24.

[100] Briusova mentions that the Red Professors' Faction was abolished in her letter to the Conservatory administration in 1928. She doesn't specify further on when or why the Faction was shut down. Ibid.

[101] Nelson, 166-167, 210-211.

[102] The timeline here is unfortunately fuzzy. Briusova's notes on the event (RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 24) suggest that the attack on *pedfak* happened before or during 1928. According to Minor's timeline, Briusova left *pedfak* in 1927 (Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education,* 67), though there have been a

On January 29th, 1928, Briusova left her position as academic dean as well.[103] While she remained a professor of music theory and folklore, this action, in conjunction with her resignation as pedagogical dean, significantly reduced Briusova's relationship with the Conservatory administration, an indication of her disenchantment with the Conservatory as a whole. While some of Briusova's achievements at the Conservatory were a natural extension of her early work – teaching music theory by practical application, emphasizing choral singing and folk song in her other classes, training future teachers as she had done at Shaniavskii and OMO – some of the administrative work, especially when it clashed with the demands of Narkompros agencies, drained Briusova of her youthful optimism.[104] No longer naive and idealistic, Briusova learned to fight ideological battles along Party lines and suffered the consequences when public opinion shifted with the wind.

After resigning from her administrative positions at the Conservatory and leaving Narkompros in 1929, Briusova spent the rest of her career writing and researching. As Minor describes it, Briusova became interested in "popularizing" musical knowledge, creating booklets for the general public that would aid in self-education projects and writing articles about her research on folk songs. Unencumbered by administrative work, Briusova's writing output increased significantly.[105] Late in life, Briusova's love for folk song, present throughout her career, came into full bloom. In addition to studying Russian folk songs, Briusova widened her

number of inconsistencies in dates between Minor's 1994 and 2000 works. It is also unclear if Briusova resigned from this post or was asked to step down.

[103] Announcement of Briusova to the governing body and director of the Moscow State Conservatory, with requests to free her from her duties as prorector of the academic part of the Conservatory (1928), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 29.

[104] For more on Briusova's approach to music theory classes, specifically the use of practical application (i.e., singing, listening, and composition), see N. I. Briusova, "Osnovy raboty v klassakh teorii muzyki [Bases of Classes on Music Theory]" in *Muzykal'naia nov'* no. 5 (1924).

[105] For reference, of the 50 journal articles I have record of Briusova writing, 27 of them were written between 1928 and 1951, when she died.

scope to the study of the folk songs of other Soviet *narod* – Polish, Ukrainian, Georgian, Caucasian, Siberian, Kyrgyz, etc.[106]

Though her career as a mass music educator had given her reason for bitterness and resentment, and even though, by the end of her life, Briusova regarded her early years of mass music education work rather cynically, the gift of retrospection allowed Briusova to see how far mass music education had come over the last four decades. As she wrote in her 1947 retrospective, the work of institutions like the Moscow People's Conservatory and OMO set a new normal for music culture in the Soviet Union. Thanks to their legacy (which was her legacy), teaching music theory through practical application, encouraging students to sing folk songs and incorporate them in their compositions, introducing music before a concert, making music accessible to the masses at large had become foundations of Soviet music education. Briusova had fundamentally shaped the nature of her field. In 1951, she was awarded the honorary title of Emeritus Activist in the Arts. She died in Moscow later that year.[107]

In this chapter, we have seen the ways in which Briusova's ideas about mass music education changed and stayed the same. Throughout her career, she was interested in the collective power of music, its ability to bring people together and encourage them to think more mindfully. However, the differences in the political environments of late-Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union necessitated some ideological adaptation of Briusova's part. In the next chapter, we will investigate one of these adaptations: a transition from educating the *narod* to elevating proletarian consciousness.

106 Minor, *N. I. Briusova - Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar*, 64-75.
107 Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 23.

Chapter (2)

Who is the *narod*?: Pedagogy and Politics in Briusova's Mass Music Education Program

On April 28, 1930, Nadezhda Briusova wrote a letter to an old colleague, Nadezhda Krupskaya. A high-profile Party member, Krupskaya was not only Lenin's widow, but also a member of the Central Committee and the current Deputy Minister of Education. Briusova and Krupskaya worked at Narkompros, Proletkult, and Glavprofobr on projects related to children and adult education, but due to Briusova's focus on music, their work rarely overlapped.[108] Hoping to join the Communist Party, Briusova asks Krupskaya for her endorsement:

> "Nadezhda Konstaninova [Krupskaya], I gave my announcement to the Party. I decided to do this a long time ago, more than a year ago. I have in front of me a letter you wrote to me exactly a year ago, when I asked you to give me advice. I do not know what you think of me now, since it has been so long since you have known my work. But I have always believed, as do probably many others, that with you it is possible to talk about anything, even the most challenging things. I have a request for you – read my autobiography, which I presented in our conservatory cell, there I talk about everything in more detail and more clearly than in my previous letter to you. After that, I would like to see you and speak with you. N. Briusova."[109]

Briusova waited anxiously for an answer. By April 1930, political tensions were rising in the Soviet Union. After the infamous Shakhty Trials in 1928, in which Stalin scapegoated "bourgeois-specialist" engineers for the winter grain crisis, class struggle had returned to the forefront of Soviet politics. As a member of the intelligentsia herself, working at a historically conservative institution, the Moscow Conservatory, Briusova recognized that she could classify as one of these odious "bourgeois-specialists." Applying for party membership was her way of guaranteeing for herself political asylum.

[108] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 361.

[109] Correspondence between Briusova and Krupskaya about the recommendation of Briusova to become a member of the Party (April 28,1930), Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI) f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 35, l. 1. [Author's translation].

Months passed until finally, this letter arrived. In it, Krupskaya does not give Briusova an endorsement, insinuating behind friendly language that she does not consider Briusova a true Bolshevik:

> "Comrade Briusova,
>
> Forgive me, that I took so long to respond to your letter. [...]. I read your autobiography with great interest. In it, we see things which connect you to the Party. But I am very far from your circle of people interested in art and I don't know the internal fights that go on between them. I don't know how these fights are connected with party questions, how they reflect the questions connected to the fights within the party. Much of your autobiography very well demonstrates your character as a social activist *(obshchestvennika)*, but completely in the shadow is your character as a party member *(partiitsa)*.
>
> I know you only as a social activist. [...] You need to find someone who knows you from the other side."[110]

Krupskaya claims that the reason she cannot support Briusova's nomination to the Party is because she, as an education specialist and not a musician, is unfamiliar with how Briusova's work contributes and relates to the existing dynamic within the musical circle of the party. But it seems that the real reason Krupskaya does not endorse her is revealed in this sentence: "Much of your autobiography very well demonstrates your character as a social activist, but completely in the shadow is your character as a Party member." Krupskaya pointedly labels Briusova as a "social activist" (*obshchestvennika*) rather than a "party member" (*partiitsa*) because she considers her work to create a social good that is not specifically Bolshevik.

Krupskaya had reason to be suspicious of Briusova's allegiance to the Party. As discussed in the last chapter, mass music education long predated Bolshevism. As Pauline Fairclough points out, "the fundamental concept of sharing art with the masses was not a Bolshevik one. Thus musicians who strove to do just that in the early revolutionary years were not necessarily politically allied to Bolshevism; rather, they were continuing a tradition with very

[110] Ibid: 2.

deep roots."[111] This deeply rooted tradition began with the intelligentsia of the mid-19th century, who saw it as their solemn duty "to repay their debt to society by promoting the education and 'enlightenment' of the people [*narod*]."[112] Therefore, Krupskaya may have been right to see Briusova's mass music education program, which centered its attention on the *narod*, as more intimately connected to late-Imperialist than Bolshevik pedagogical practices.

Briusova started distancing herself from the late-Imperial origins of her work in the mid-1920s, attempting to demonstrate her Bolshevik sympathies by articulating her commitment to the enlightenment of the proletarian masses. However, despite her attempts to shift her focus from the education of the *narod* to the education of the proletariat, Briusova struggled to be perceived as truly Bolshevik.[113] In this chapter, I begin by investigating Briusova's relationship with late-Imperial ideals of mass music education, such as a commitment to the *narod* and a belief in the universal experience of music. Next, I explore Briusova's work in the early revolutionary years, noting a simultaneous influx in the her allusions to proletarian-only education and a retention of late-Imperial ideals. Finally, I analyze the increased Briusova's increased use of Bolshevik rhetoric in the mid-1920s as she seeks to express, unsuccessfully, her Party alignment by demanding the proletarianization and Sovietization of the Moscow Conservatory. Ultimately, I argue that Briusova's inability to win Krupskaya's favor demonstrates that her version of mass music education – with its mission to educate the *narod*

[111] Fairclough, 15.
[112] Nelson, 7.
[113] Briusova originally applied for Party membership in the twenties, received endorsements from Lebedinskii and Krylova, but was denied membership. She then asked Krupskaya for help in 1930, but was denied again. Nelson, 272 n19. She eventually received membership status during WWII, when she served as the assistant secretary of the conservatory's Party organization from 1941-1943. Edmunds, 301.

about the riches of their cultural heritage – could never completely shed its late-Imperial influence.

1 - When narod *meant the masses*

After graduating from the Moscow Conservatory in 1904, Nadezhda Briusova entered the workforce at the height of mass education's popularity in Russia. In the wake of the 1905 Revolution, members of the intelligentsia believed that the liberating events of 1905 must be commemorated with a massive push to educate the *narod.* As discussed in Chapter 1, the 1905 Revolution had laid bare the divisions in Russian society. Having expected the masses to come together in opposition to the throne, the intelligentsia was disappointed to learn that not everyone in Russia aligned with their political viewpoint. The intelligentsia deployed mass education as a means of unifying the masses and creating more support for their liberal political agenda.[114] This liberalizing impulse was embodied in the institution of people's universities (*narodnye universitety)* all across Russia. People's universities sought to provide higher-education to any and all who wanted to study, regardless of class, gender, or even educational background.[115]

The first people's university was founded in 1906 in St. Petersburg, by the initiative of one civic-minded activist, who, in a meeting of the city duma, argued that the best way to commemorate the liberating acts of the Revolution was to "open a people's university and organize it in such a way that it can develop widely for the satisfaction of the urgent spiritual

[114] These people's universities were also formed in opposition to tsarist higher-education, which "attempted to increase the numbers of qualified candidates to the bureaucracy and professions while maintaining the social hierarchy of the estate (*soslovie*) order and to expand and diversify the higher education without conceding more autonomy to the universities and intelligentsia." Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind*. Studies of the Harriman Institute. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997) 39.

[115] As David-Fox writes, the connection between people's universities and women's education was "non-coincidental: the movement to create university-level courses for women, still barred from universities, was an integral part of the "social-pedagogical" movement." David-Fox, 40. In 1910, women accounted for 56.7% of the Shaniavskii student body. Lee, 45.

demands of the people."[116] As a result of this activism, the St. Petersburg Society of People's University began presenting lectures in March of 1906, and shortly thereafter, two people's universities in Moscow opened up: the Moscow Society of People's Universities and the Moscow City People's University named for A. L. Shaniavskii (hereafter referred to as the Shaniavskii University).

Eager to join in the democratization of knowledge, Briusova co-founded the Moscow People's Conservatory (MPC) in 1906, which was a part of the Moscow Society of People's Universities.[117] As part of this Society, the MPC's mission aligned with the liberalizing philosophy of its parent institution. Nominally, the MPC classes sought to provide high-quality music education to the *narod*. Classes were taught at night in order to accommodate a worker's schedule, but, as Mitchell points out, the conservatory's student body consisted of few working class people.[118] This was because the conservatory required some prior musical knowledge and an enrollment fee which was often prohibitively expensive for working class students. The classes also were never intended for the sole benefit of the working classes. As David-Fox mentions in his book *Revolution of the Mind*, the Bolsheviks, a minority party in the first decade of the 20th century, were the only political group advocating for the proletarianization of the people's universities at this time.[119] Somewhat ironically, the MPC's mission to democratize musical knowledge for the *narod* largely resulted in a student body that consisted of low-ranking bureaucratic officials and their relatives.[120]

[116] David Currie Lee, *The People's Universities of the USSR* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1998), 22.
[117] Briusova, "Musical Enlightenment and Education in the Years of the Revolution" in *Music and Revolution*, 1926: 25.
[118] Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 58.
[119] David-Fox, 39-41.
[120] Ibid.

As Lee demonstrates, one of the most common problems plaguing people's universities across the nation was the tendency of institutions to overestimate the academic abilities of the *narod*. Course offerings at people's universities aimed to stay on par with standards of higher-education in the West, even though by 1905, the literacy rate in Russia was only 21.2% (in comparison with England's 92% and American 89.3%).[121] People's universities, in their romanticization of the social value of higher education, were all together ignorant of the pedagogical needs of the *narod*. The MPC was no exception. As even Briusova concedes, music educators such as herself could only hope to guess at the best approach to enlighten the masses with music education.[122] Briusova's own pedagogical style was hit or miss when it came to making music accessible to the *narod.*

For example, the curricula for the music theory classes at the MPC hardly seem to be written with the layperson in mind. Within the first year, students learned the names of pitches and intervals, types of resolutions, relationship of stability and instability within a key, and phrase structure, and drew comparisons between verbal and music speech. Music theory classes did not have a "listening to music" or composition component, meaning that classes lacked any sort of practical application and lectures, as a result, were rather dull. Struggling to follow along in one of these classes, Iusiia Sokolova, writes to Briusova, "I can ask you only one thing: give me the ability to develop musically, at least a little bit, to allow me at least a small but active participation in singing and music… I cannot quietly listen to your lecture because every word of yours shows me my musical illiteracy."[123] The class's textbook included dizzying displays of modal rhythm and spiral key relationships, drawn from Briusova's colleague's Iavorskii's

[121] Lee, 28.
[122] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years after October (from Memory)," 46.
[123] Mitchell, 57. [Mitchell's translation].

research, with little to no written explanation under each chart.[124] For an example of one such spiral chart, see below.[125] The highly abstract nature of the class meant that only students with an aptitude for theory would be able to find a foothold.

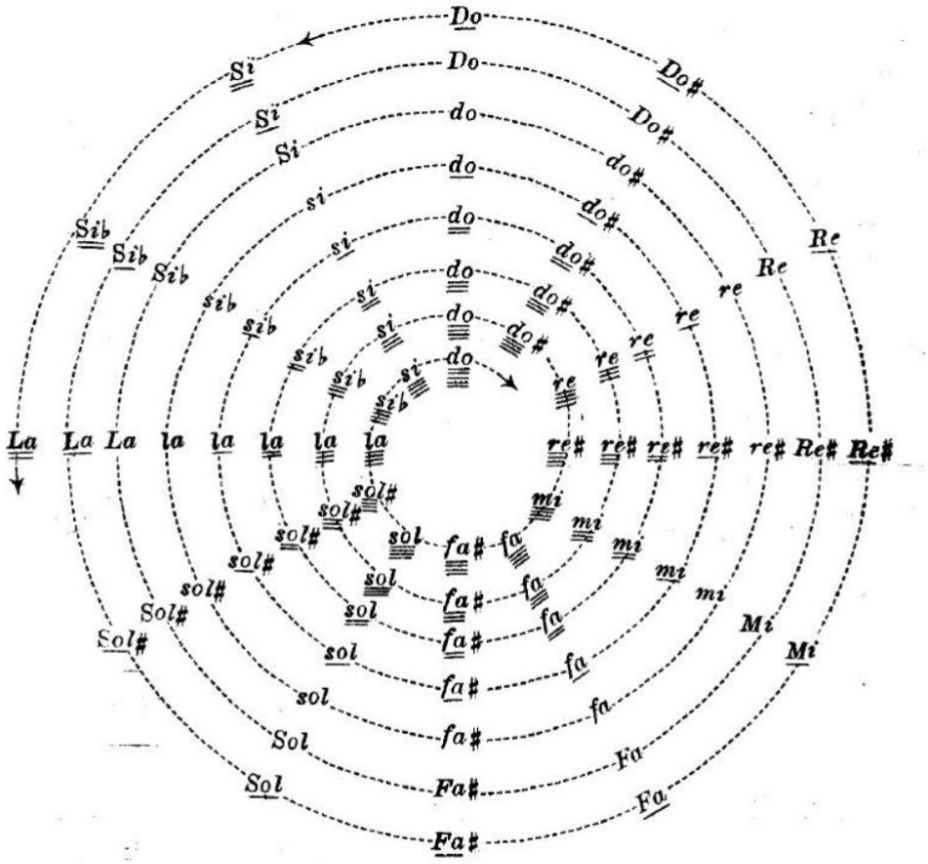


Figure 2. Boleslav Yavorsky. The circle of fifth, organized in a spiral form. The outer points of the spiral always form a tritone, the most unstable interval.
Both schemes were reprinted in Protopopov, Sergey Vladimirovich. *Elementï stroyeniya muzïkal'noy rechi* [Elements of the Structure of Musical Speech]. 2 vols Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Muzïkal'nïy Sektor, 1930. They are reproduced here from this publication, which was edited by Yavorsky and was essentially an expanded explanation of his theory.

Briusova's choral classes also failed to address student interests. Briusova centered choral singing in the People's Conservatory curricula because she believed that singing in a collective

[124] Programs for music theory in the People's Conservatory (1910-1915), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 12. [Author's translation].

[125] This photo and caption were copied from Pantaleeva, *Formation of Russian Musicology from Sacchetti to Asafyev, 1885-1931,* 82.

was the best way to unify the *narod.*[126] However, as Mitchell argues, students were generally more interested in growing individually as musicians through private instruction, demonstrating that "the ideal of individuality and self-expression had saturated Russian society to a degree not fully acknowledged in the cultural elite, who continued to cling to an idealized image of an inherently communal *narod*."[127] The cultural elites' inability to gauge the needs of the student body, meant that many classes failed to achieve their pedagogical goals of unifying the *narod.*

Although her music theory classes failed to accommodate the inexperienced musician, and her choral classes struggled to meet student interests, Briusova's *slushanie muzyki* ("listening to music") class, the very first of its kind, provided a successful model for future mass music education programs.[128] Acknowledging that students coming into the class would have a wide range of listening experiences, Briusova provided a multi-tiered learning plan to accommodate a variety of competency levels. For students new to listening critically to music, Briusova focused on artistic perception, connecting the listening experience to emotions and images. As their listening abilities matured, she would help them articulate their aural experience by introducing them to music theory and composition.[129]

What made *slushanie muzyki* classes accessible was Briusova's firm belief that music is the art form best able to express the human experience. Briusova did not see music as simply a fine art, but rather an aural depiction of the spiritual world that all humans inhabit. As Minor summarizes, Briusova believed that, "Music, more than any other art, is connected to life because it reflects the very essence of life – movement. It is exactly this fullness of life, reflected

[126] Mitchell, 54-59. [Mitchell's translation].
[127] Ibid., 58.
[128] N. N. Minor, *N. I. Briusova: Musician, Pedagogue, Scholar,* 26.
[129] Ibid., 23- 24. [Author's translation].

in musical creations, that is the reason for emotional perception."[130] In other words, music is made up of two elements: movement and feeling. Together, the movement of the music reflects the movement of emotion, or as Briusova put it, "The movement of musical feeling … would be like a mirror to spiritual movements."[131] By breaking music down into these foundational elements, Briusova was showing that music is written in a language that everyone can understand. Therefore, the goal of *slushanie muzyki* classes became teaching students how to articulate their aural experiences, or as Briusova called it, their *muzykal'naia zhin'* or "musical life."

One of Briusova's other successful pedagogical ideas was the collective composition of children's opera by children, discussed in Chapter 1. By providing her students the tools to write their own opera collectives, Briusova gave her students total ownership over a musical product. Collective composition – because it encouraged the active, creative participation of all those involved in its production – proved to be a much more effective than choral classes at bringing students together and teaching them musical fundamentals.[132]

By the time 1917 hit, Briusova, now with ten years of mass music education experience under her belt, was just starting to solidify her pedagogical style. She had received her students' feedback. She had written and re-written class syllabi. She had begun emphasizing more and more in her pedagogical practices the importance of composition, performance, and practical

[130] Ibid., 21. [Author's translation].
[131] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 74. [Author's translation].
[132] Rebecca Mitchell criticizes this practice of collective composition, arguing that it was another example of the elitism of the musical intelligentsia, who saw themselves as "the conductors of [the *narod's*] musical creation." She claims that the idea that students would only be allowed to write a small piece of the whole while music-specialists, such as Briusova, organized these melodies into a coherent unit, perpetuated the feeling that success in music required specialized training. While this argument have some validity in an adult music education class, it seems an inappropriate critique for a class populated with pre-adolescents. Mitchell, 56.

applications of music education. It was at this moment, that October Revolution happened, and the rules of mass music education began to change.

2 - Who was the post-Revolutionary narod*?*

In her book, *Nietzsche's Orphans,* Rebecca Mitchell claims that Nadezhda Briusova transitioned easily into the Soviet age, explaining that "the revolution had ushered in the opportunity to put into practice the same treasured ideas she had previously sought to fulfill in the People's Conservatory, but now with the additional sheen of political legitimacy and state support."[133] But this is not the full picture. Given that Krupskaya refused to endorse Briusova's nomination to the Party in 1928, it is clear that Briusova did not always enjoy political legitimacy in the new State. While it is true that in the first years after the October Revolution, Briusova was able to draw on her expertise at the Moscow People's Conservatory to shape emerging ideas about Soviet mass music education in her positions at Narkompros and Proletkult, as years passed, her late-Imperial vision had to undergo serious revision to match the rather blurry Party line. In this section, I will identify the at-first small and later significant changes that Briusova made to her work after 1917 while pointing out how certain hallmarks of her late-Imperial work survive and even influence the Soviet age.

In some ways, immediately after the October Revolution, the act of creating Soviet music culture was simply a matter of copy-and-paste from the late-Imperial era. As author of *Classics for the Masses*, Pauline Fairclough argues, "there was no Soviet culture" after the October Revolution, "there was only pre-revolutionary culture that either continued after 1917… or was cut short by waves of emigration."[134] Though this assertion of the non-existence of Soviet culture

[133] Mitchell, 210.
[134] Fairclough, 12.

in 1917 may be overly simplistic, Fairclough is right to point out continuity in music culture across the revolutionary divide. For Briusova, this meant continuing her work teaching music theory, choral, and *slushanie muzyki* classes, organizing public concerts, and putting together amateur performance opportunities. However, though the work ostensibly stayed the same, the audience had changed.

Concerts that Briusova had once organized for the *narod* were now for the sole benefit of the proletariat. In December 1917, as chair of the Moscow Soviet's Arts Commission, Briusova organized a concert-lecture series in a local workers' club. Aside from a rousing rendition of the Internationale, which was a post-Revolutionary addition to Briusova's concert programming, the concert did not differ much from concerts at the Moscow People's Conservatory before the Revolution. It consisted of four concerts with pre-concert talks on the following topics: “Folk Songs,” “Our Classics,” “The School of the ‘Mighty Handful,’” and “Tchaikovsky and his Followers.”[135] Though the concert programming was the same, this concert for workers signaled a major shift in the conceptualization of mass music education. In the late-Imperial Russia, mass music education had been all about the democratization of musical knowledge. Now, in the Soviet era, mass music education meant elevating *proletarian* consciousness. Commemorating this shift, Briusova began using new words to address her audience – *rabochii* (workers), proletariat, *mass* – though the word *narod* never completely left her vocabulary, betraying her late-Imperial ideals and dedication to the democratization of musical knowledge.

In her speech at the First All-Russian Conference of Proletkult on Sept. 17, 1918, Briusova oscillates between *narod* and *rabochii* terminology. She begins by arguing that it is the duty of Proletkult to teach the *narod* how to create and understand music. She explains that

[135] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 49.

"music of the *narod*" must teach people how to live and how to build life.[136] She speaks in sweeping declarations about the universal experience of listening to and understanding music, but at the end of her speech, she narrows her focus to workers alone. She says that Proletkult's next step should be to form cells of comrade-workers who can teach one another to understand music.

In this speech, Briusova does not make a real distinction between *narod* and *rabochii*, suggesting that she did not see late-Imperial and Soviet conceptions of mass music education as mutually exclusive. Indeed, in both periods, Briusova stayed true to her deep belief in music's collective and emotional power. In all of her positions – at the Moscow Soviet, Narkompros, and Proletkult, Briusova advocated for this belief. For example, in programming the December 1917 concert-lecture series, Briusova chose the music of Tchaikovsky, Glinka, and others because, above all else, their music reflects "the greatest depth of feeling."[137] In the establishing documents of the Narkompros's First Musical Artel, which Briusova chaired, the very first sentence reads, "The goal of the existence of the first musical artel is the deepening and broadening of musical feeling."[138] And finally, in the above-mentioned Proletkult meeting, Briusova begins her speech, "That new world is easier to express through music than through any other art form. Another artist has to surmount numerous obstacles, while the musician can easily embody his feelings in sound."[139]

Whether she wrote about the *narod* or the *rabochii*, the proletariat masses or just people in general, Briusova's message was that music is universal. Because of its unique ability to

[136] Rosenberg, ed., 453.
[137] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 52. [Author's translation].
[138] Stepanova, 238. [Author's translation]. The First Music Artel was a group of dedicated musicians and teachers, who carried out all of OMO's initiatives of public music education.
[139] Rosenberg, 452.

depict real life through emotion, music is for everyone. This was the most compelling piece of Briusova's mass music education program, but it became harder and harder to sustain as the Party's definition of *narod* continued to narrow.

3 - From the **narod** *to the proletariat: the Sovietization of the Moscow Conservatory*

As discussed in Chapter 1, in 1921, Briusova made a significant career change which would profoundly alter the way she practiced mass music education: she became a professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Working for the Conservatory meant that Briusova's work was now tied to the more conservative side of the musical world, the realm of professional music education which looked back on the pre-Revolutionary days as a golden age. Distancing herself from her conservative colleagues, Briusova worked hard to demonstrate her allegiance to the Party by employing more explicitly Bolshevik rhetoric in her written work and committing herself and her department to the increased enrollment of proletarian and peasant students. However, despite her seemingly genuine commitment to the Sovietization of the Moscow Conservatory and music education in general, Bolsheviks like Krupskaya still saw Briusova as a "social activist" working for the *narod* rather than a Party member fighting for the proletariat.

In 1923, Briusova flaunted her Party loyalty by co-founding the Red Professors' Faction, a coalition of Moscow Conservatory professors dedicated to increasing proletarian and peasant institutional representation. The Red Professors' Faction worked closely with Communist student groups to promote mass musical work and community engagement. For example, between December 1924 and February 1925, 197 students, divided into three groups – event coordinators, instructors, and performers – put on 31 concerts at eight workers' clubs.[140] The next year, they also involved workers' club members in a complete production of Rimsky-

[140] Edmunds, 95-96.

Korsakov's opera *The Tsar's Bride*.[141] In addition to these outreach programs, Briusova ran the Examination Commission which sought to craft exams that more accurately evaluated the skill of students without favoring students from better educational backgrounds.

Bolstered by her work at the Red Professors' Faction, in 1924, Briusova was named the dean of the pedagogical faculty, or *pedfak.* The purpose of *pedfak* was to bring the Conservatory into the Soviet age. Rather than producing graduates who spent all their time isolated in practice rooms and only created art for entertainment value, revolutionary-minded professors demanded that the Conservatory begin training mass music educators, especially workers' club leaders and choral directors, who could go out into their communities and spread musical knowledge to the *narod*. For example, students in *pedfak* were often active members in the Red Professors' Faction's aforementioned community outreach programs. By 1926, the Conservatory, in recognition of the importance of *pedfak*'s role, listed the new department as the administrative equal of performance and composition departments.[142]

In many ways, being dean of *pedfak* was a natural extension of some of Briusova's earlier work. In this position, Briusova molded curricula for future teachers of mass music education, relying on her experience teaching at the People's Conservatory, at her own private music school, and as public music education administrator at Proletkult and Narkompros to do so. By training mass music educators who would go out into the world and teach, *pedfak* was, in essence, serving the *narod*, just indirectly. Moreover, *pedfak* was the department which enrolled the highest percentage of proletarian and peasant students, offering members of the *narod* access to Conservatory-level education. Serving as dean of *pedfak* gave Briusova the opportunity to

[141] This seems to be a nod to Taneev's pedagogical emphasis on performing operas as an accessible means of learning them more intimately. Edmunds, 96.
[142] Nelson, 166.

continue addressing the musical needs of the *narod*, though by this point in her career, she narrowed her focus to peasants and proletariats, specifically.

Despite *pedfak*'s commitment to the proletarianizing the Conservatory, the department was ultimately deemed a failure. While the proletarianization of the Conservatory was an important step towards Sovietization, it was equally important to the Party that the Conservatory continue producing high-quality musicians. Lenin had always stressed that in order for proletarian culture to succeed it had to surpass bourgeois culture. Therefore, proletarian music that was poorly executed actually constituted a threat to the Communist cause, because it allowed bourgeois music to "conquer" Soviet taste.[143] Under Briusova's watch, *pedfak* had become a catch-all for students who lacked the preparation and talent to become composers or performers. Oftentimes when the Komsomol or a trade-union nominated a student for admission to the Conservatory, they would be placed in *pedfak*, because they were not qualified to study anywhere else in the Conservatory. So while *pedfak* was the most Soviet branch of the Conservatory – enrolling more proletarian and peasant student than any other department, training students to teach music to amateurs, offering practical application for a professional music degree – it threatened to ruin the Conservatory's (and therefore the State's) reputation of professional and musical excellence.[144] The failure of *pedfak* may have tainted Briusova's reputation and hurt her chances at becoming a Bolshevik leader or Party member.

Only three years after accepting this post, Briusova resigned, just as the deficiencies of her department came under public scrutiny.[145] In January, 1928, the former director of the

[143] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 43.
[144] Nelson, 166-167, 210-211.
[145] There are other inconsistencies between Frolova-Walker's and Nelson's accounts of the attack on *pedfak*. For example, Frolova-Walker claims that *pedfak* was incorporated into other departments, per Goldenweiser's suggestion, after this affair, while Nelson implies that *pedfak* continued in operation after this.

Conservatory, Alexander Goldenweiser launched campaign to shut down *pedfak.* He, along with the Conservatory's current director, Konstatin Igumnov, and Mikhail Ivanov-Boretskii, a member of the Red Professors' Faction, declared *pedfak* a failure, a magnet for untalented and inexperienced musicians who had no prospect of a performance career.[146] In an external review of the department, the reviewer enumerates the seemingly obvious qualifications that teachers and students in *pedfak* must have: "Teachers of singing or playing musical instruments must have experience performing in a concert hall, teachers of music theory must have been students of music theory or compositions, teachers of music methodology must have practice in that area. [...] The Conservatory must categorically refuse acceptance to the instructor-pedagogical faculty anyone with inadequate preparation or talent." The review makes clear that *pedfak* does not measure up to even these baseline expectations.[147] For example, no one in the faculty played an orchestral instrument (string, wind, brass, and percussion instruments), meaning that the department could not offer courses on how to teach orchestral instrument performance, a huge gap in the department's curricular offerings. This peer assault – especially from fellow Red Professor, Ivanov-Boretskii – added another crack in Briusova's image, rendering her a flawed and unfit Party member.

In response to these allegations against her department, Briusova fought fire with fire, using Party rhetoric to accuse her critics of retrogressive political affiliations. In a scathing review of the state of the Moscow Conservatory, Briusova argues that the Conservatory was so obsessed with maintaining and surpassing its antebellum reputation as a world-class musical

[146] Frolova-Walker and Walker, 206. Nelson, 210-211.

[147] Briusova's memo about the state of the Moscow State Conservatory, resolutions of the commission for examination of instructor-pedagogues of the faculty, excerpts from the protocols of the interfaculty music-theory commission of the conservatory about the arrangement in areas of music theory, etc. (1923-1928), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 24, l. 17-19. [Author's translation]. The review itself is undated, but because it is contained in this file, we can assume it was written between 1923 and 1928.

institution, that it completely forgot to adapt to its Soviet present.[148] She chastises the Conservatory for starting its Soviet-era reforms so much later than other institutions of higher learning *(VUZy)*. She says that, "professors are very far from questions about the full Sovietization of *VUZy*, the proletarianization of the student population, the orientation of workers during preparation [for conservatory] for the maintenance of the working masses, etc."[149] While she admits that *pedfak* suffered from poor student performance and faculty instruction, she opposed the dissolution of the department and scoffed at the implication that *pedfak* was the Conservatory's sole squeaky wheel. [150] In fact, she suggests that instead of deriding *pedfak*, the Conservatory should follow in its footsteps. She calls for the complete proletarianization of the Conservatory, so that, first, the student body can have a higher percentage of proletarian and peasant students and, second, musical culture can begin to reflect the influence of proletarian ideology and creation.

Breaking from her previous commitment to the *narod*, Briusova clearly demonstrates in this article her newfound attitude that mass music education and even professional music education should benefit the proletariat alone, referring constantly to the "proletarianization" or "Sovietization" of the Conservatory and without once referencing the *narod*. Briusova was doing everything in her power to exhibit her Party loyalties. By chairing the Red Professors' Faction and acting as dean for *pedfak*, she had taken on, for all the world to see, the tasks of Sovietization

[148] Briusova's memo about the state of the Moscow State Conservatory (1928), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 24, l. 15-17. [Author's translation]. The timeline here is regrettably unclear. This archival document is dated 1928, without a month specified. Briusova likely wrote this review of the Moscow Conservatory after Goldenweiser, Igumnov, and Ivanov-Boretskii issued their attack on *pedfak*, given that that happened in January.
[149] Briusova's memo about the state of the Moscow State Conservatory (1928), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 24, l. 15-17. [Author's translation].
[150] Nelson, 211. And indeed, Briusova was not the only one to question the political allegiances of the Conservatory. In an article published in Pravda, an anonymous author, innocuously named Z.Z., denounces the rightism of the conservatory, naming Goldenweiser and two others as a *troika* of conspirators against the Soviet cause. Frolova-Walker and Walker, 206.

as her own personal mantle. She positioned herself as the one true soldier of socialism within the Conservatory. And yet, in 1930, when Briusova wrote to Krupskaya, seeking an endorsement for her nomination to the Party, she was denied. Despite all of Briusova's effort to separate herself from her late-Imperial past, Krupskaya did not consider Briusova a true Bolshevik, but rather "social activist" fighting for the *narod,* and not the proletariat.

Briusova may not have seen herself as a figure of continuity, but her peers did. She tried desperately to prove that she had cut the ties with late-Imperial pedagogy and its idealization of the *narod,* but no matter what she did, she could not outrun her past. Despite all of her political posturing, she simply did not measure up to Krupskaya's expectations of a Bolshevik. She was an ideological outsider. While certain elements of her mass music education transitioned seamlessly into the Soviet era, others were saddled with problematic implications. As we have seen in this chapter, her late-Imperial dedication to democratizing, not proletarianizing, mass music education was one such problem, which tagged Briusova as a "social activist" rather than a Bolshevik, even after she adopted proletarian-centric rhetoric. The other problem that plagued Briusova's mass music education program was the question of what kind of music a mass music educator should teach in the Soviet era. This will be our topic for the next chapter.

Chapter (3)

Folk Song and Russian Classics: Cultural Nationalism in Briusova's Pedagogy

One night at the Kremlin, after giving a rousing speech to a room full of Red Army soldiers, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was eager to sneak out before the evening entertainment began.[151] Lenin was a great music-lover. Describing one of Beethoven's piano sonatas, he once wrote, "I know nothing which is greater than the *Appassionata*; I would like to listen to it every day. It is marvelous, superhuman music."[152] But on this particular night, he was too tired for music. Unfortunately for Lenin, just as he was leaving, he ran into the concert's organizer, N. G. Podgoretskaia, who said probingly, "What – you don't want to watch the show?" Guilted into staying, Lenin sat through the whole performance and at the end, went up to Podgoretskaia and shook her hand warmly, clearly moved. Podgoretskaia, embarrassed, apologized to Lenin for the conservative programming that did not include a single piece based on revolutionary themes. Shaking his head, Lenin replied, "Don't worry. Such works will come to be, but for now you must use as many Russian classics as possible to acquaint workers with the Russian tradition."[153]

This was an odd thing for the leader of the Soviet state and the Communist Party to say. After all, Podgoretskaia had reason to be embarrassed by her concert's Russo-centric programming: it failed to follow Lenin's own internationalist policy. As Lenin wrote in 1922, in order to avoid becoming an imperialist, "Great-Russian bully," the Soviet administration had to suppress national pride within the Russian SSR – the "oppressor" nation – and encourage

[151] Unfortunately, in her retelling of this story, Briusova does not indicate when Podgoretskaia's encounter with Lenin happened. This story was originally printed in the journal *Teatralnaia dekada* in 1934, so the encounter may have happened any time between 1918 (after the Bolsheviks had moved the capital to Moscow) and 1924 (when Lenin died). Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 49.
[152] Quoting from a letter from Lenin to writer Maxim Gorky in 1918, in Nelson, 1. [Nelson's translation].
[153] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 49. [Author's translation].

national pride within non-Russian SSRs – the "oppressed" nations.[154] Lenin argued that cultivating an internationalist attitude in the USSR was a crucial step in the growth of proletarian consciousness, because

> Nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; "offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades.[155]

So, the question remains: if Lenin believed so strongly in the dangers of national injustice, why didn't he express his dismay at the concert's clear show of Russian national pride? Why would Lenin so explicitly say that the role of the concert organizer should be to acquaint the proletarian masses with the *Russian* tradition when surely this is a direct contradiction of his own conviction that Russian nationalism should be suppressed?

One possible explanation for Lenin's advocacy of teaching and performing the Russian classics (aside from the fact that not much revolutionary music existed at this point) was a desire to unify Soviet society around their common past. In the wake of the October Revolution, the newly minted Soviet people were reeling from unprecedented social disruption. With the legitimacy of the imperial Russian state nullified by the Revolution, the Soviet people no longer laid claim on a common history or a common identity. Because the success of a socialist revolution relied on unity within the proletarian masses, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to find something that could bring the Soviet people together. There were two answers for this particular problem, one class-based, and one history-based: the creation of a distinctly proletarian culture and the creation of a new Soviet identity, based on the usable elements of the pre-existing

[154] V. I. Lenin, "The Question of Nationalities Or 'Autonomisation'" (Dec 31, 1922). Accessed Feb 23, 2020. https://www.marxists.org. [Their translation].
[155] Ibid.

Imperial past. These two methods can both be categorized as "cultural nationalism," or the use of culture to create a national identity.[156] The Bolsheviks, Lenin included, fluctuated between advocating for class-based and history-based cultural nationalism, causing inconsistencies in cultural projects such as Nadezhda Briusova's mass music education program.

Because internationalism was the official policy of the Soviet State, many historians ignore the role of nationalism in Soviet history. In the musicological circles, debates about the influence of nationalism on Russian music after 1917 are almost non-existent.[157] In her book *Russian Music and Nationalism*, Frolova-Walker touches on latent Russian nationalism in the compositional practices of late-Imperial Russia and Stalin's Soviet Union, but she suggests that Russian nationalism was largely dormant between 1905 and the start of World War II. [158] Therefore, this thesis may be the first to analyze the hidden role that nationalism played in music education leading up to and during the early Soviet years.

In this chapter, I explore Briusova's treatment of Russian cultural heritage in her mass music education program, demonstrating how continuity and change in her approach mirror ambiguities in the Soviet state's approach to cultural nationalism. I begin the chapter by developing an understanding of Briusova's relationship with Russian national music before the Revolution. Next, I argue that Briusova envisioned her mass music education program, before and after the Revolution, as an instrument for the spread of Russian cultural heritage among the *narod*. Finally, I investigate instances in which Briusova adopted a more class-based approach to

[156] Hutchinson describes Cultural Nationalism within the context of the intelligentsia's opposition to the state in Modern Ireland. Translating this term into the Soviet context, the Bolsheviks are at once the "opposition intelligentsia" and the State. John Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism, Elite Mobility and Nation-Building: Communitarian Politics in Modern Ireland" in *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 4 (Dec 1, 1987): 482-501.
[157] For more on nationalism in Russian music leading up to the Revolution, see Richard Taruskin, "Part I: Defining Russia Musically" in *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[158] Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press Publications, 2007), xii-xiii, 226-335.

cultural nationalism, promoting more ostentatiously proletarian art forms such as mass song. Ultimately, I argue that while Briusova engaged with both class- and history-based forms of cultural nationalism, her commitment to the conservation of Russian cultural heritage stood as a central tenet of her pedagogical program throughout her career.

1 - Briusova's relationship to the cultural nationalism projects of the late-Imperial era

In late-Imperial Russian music culture, the word *narod* – meaning the Russian people, but in particular the Russian peasantry – was ubiquitous. This was because the *narod* served an important role in two separate but related cultural nationalism projects happening at this time. The first was a desire among Russian musicologists and composers to create an authentic Russian national music that could compete on the global stage with Western classics.[159] Believing that the *narod* bore the soul of the Russian people, musicians turned to peasant folk song (*narodnye pesnia*) as inspiration for the creation of a national music. Musicologists went out into the countryside to collect and compile folk songs by hand, and classical composers, most famously the *Kuchka*, used these folk songs as melodic and harmonic basis of their operas and ballets.[160] The second project was mass music education, which sought to teach the *narod* about their cultural heritage. The Moscow People's Conservatory (*Narodnaia konservatoriia*), the institution that Briusova co-founded in 1906, combined these nationalistic projects by teaching folk song and Russian classical music to the *narod*, curating the development of Russian national music through pedagogy.

[159] Frolova-Walker, 40.

[160] *Kuchka* (literally, in English "the Mighty Little Heap," but more commonly referred to as the "Mighty Five" or the "Mighty Handful") was a highly esteemed group of composers most often credited with creating the Russian sound, including Cesar Cui, Alexander Borodin, Mily Balakirev, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. For more on the *Kuchka* and their use of folk songs, see Frolova-Walker, 204.

Briusova's interest in Russian national music arose from her education at the Moscow Conservatory. While she was a student (1895–1904), Briusova could not escape debates about the best approach to creating Russian national music. On one end of the debate, the *Kuchka* and its followers advocated the use of folk music as the basis of Russian national music. On the other end, Briusova's music theory teacher, Sergei Taneev, himself a student of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, believed that in order to develop a Russian sound, Russian composers and musicologists would have to start from scratch, reinventing the very building blocks of music in order to create a style separate from Western influence.[161] In her own pedagogy, Briusova leaned closer to the *Kuchkist* approach, lauding folk song as the truest source of Russian creativity. Having been surrounded by these debates through her musical education, it is unsurprising that folk song and Russian national music would remain important issues for Briusova throughout her career.

In 1862, Mily Balakirev, a member of the *Kuchka*, a strident believer in Slavophilism (an insular ideology which defended Russian exceptionalism and isolation from the West) established St. Petersburg's Free Music School. The school was dedicated to teaching students the rudiments of folk-music education, using the folk songs that Balakirev collected to cultivate an appreciation for Russian music.[162] Forty-four years later, Briusova co-founded the Moscow People's Conservatory (MPC), using the Free Music School as a model.[163] Like the Free Music School, the MPC's curriculum centered around folk song. As Briusova recalls, at the MPC

[161] Frolova-Walker, 256.

[162] This project of national pride also had a dark side. As Taruskin demonstrates, the Free Music School's preoccupation with teaching only Russian folk song was coupled with the school's discriminatory policy against non-ethnic Russians; the faculty consisted entirely of ethnic Russians, and Jews were prohibited from even applying for admission. Taruskin, *On Russian Music*, 38. There is no evidence suggesting that the People's Conservatory continued this exclusionary admittance policy.

[163] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 27.

> students would sing Russian folk song in choral classes, in academic shows (or 'demonstrations' as they were called at the People's Conservatory), they would sit in on specialty classes about the study of folk song, and folk song would be the topic of concert-lectures. This was new and unusual for the methods of music education at the time.[164]

Briusova explains that this pedagogical emphasis on folk song was the institution's response to the "national question" (*natsional'nyi vopros*).[165] The founders of the MPC believed that teaching the *narod* folk song would cultivate their appreciation for Russian music and Russian culture, thereby providing them with an education that would serve the development of a national cultural identity.

This preoccupation with folk song connected Briusova and the MPC with Russian nationalism. Moving into the Soviet era, this blatant Russo-centric stance eventually became untenable. But, as we shall see in the next section, in the first years after the Revolution, Briusova continued to teach folk song and Russian national music in her classes, still dedicated to the conservation and spread of Russian musical culture.

2 - Cultural nationalism in Soviet Russia: teaching folk song and classical music

In 1917, Briusova gave students in her choral and *slushanie muzyki* classes a survey to assess their musical knowledge. In it, she asked her students questions about their listening to music skills, their familiarity with music literature and music theory, and their prior experience with musical groups and institutions. In the music literature section, Briusova's first question was: "Are you familiar with folk songs?" Thirty-one of the 41 students responded to this question with a resounding yes. However, when asked "What kind of pieces of musical literature do you hear in concerts, in the theater, and in home performance?," only one person mentioned

[164] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 47.
[165] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 47.

folk song. By and large, students identified the music of Chopin, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky as more appropriate for public concerts. When asked, “What kind of pieces do you like to sing and play for yourself?,” only four people responded that they played folk songs at home. The rest preferred to play Beethoven sonatas, the Chopin preludes, or even church songs.[166]

Looking over these surveys, Briusova must have realized that she had her work cut out for her teaching her students the value of their Russian cultural heritage. Her students, while familiar with folk music, did not claim it as their own or feel a great appreciation for it. They were city-dwellers, not peasants, and so folk song was not their music; it was the music of their country bumpkin cousins. [167] Moreover, they did not classify folk song as "cultured" music that belonged on the concert stage. Briusova's students associated themselves with Beethoven's well-respected piano sonatas and Tchaikovsky's operas because it raised their cultural profile. And indeed, even Briusova perpetuated this delineation between country and urban music by excluding folk song from her definition of “cultured music,” a label which she reserved for the Western and Russian classics, i.e., Glinka, Tchaikovsky and the *Kuchka*.[168]

Despite her students' lack of interest, Briusova continued teaching folk song, convinced that it could preserve, protect, and cultivate the Russian soul of the *narod*. This belief shows Briusova's fundamental misunderstanding of her students and their interests. She classified her students as the *narod*, even though they did not identify that way, and presumed that, as the

[166] Briusova issued this survey at her private music school. Programs of study and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova for choral singing and listening to music in public education schools and questionnaires of listeners with responses about their knowledge of music (1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 17, l. 12. Unfortunately, I don't have questionnaires from before the Revolution that could indicate whether pre-Revolutionary students had any real interest in folk song.

[167] I don’t have demographic information about Briusova’s private music school, though the urban setting of the school suggests that the majority of students would come from proletarian or bureaucratic families.

[168] N. I. Briusova, *Zadachi narodnogo muzykal'nogo obrazovaniia [Tasks of People's Music Education]* (Moscow: Narkompros Section of Extracurricular Education, 1919) 7, 10. Nelson, 30.

narod, her students would have an unequivocal interest in their native music, folk song, which they did not. When confronted with the fact that her students preferred Beethoven and Chopin to folk songs, she did not accommodate their interests, but rather doubled down on her endorsement of folk song. In her "How to work with choir" class, Briusova recommended, above all else, programming folk song, warning that other musical genres – especially Western classical music – could be too challenging and too far removed from the "soul of the *narod.*"[169] If a choral director chose to program something other than folk music, Briusova suggested picking repertoire that at least mimicked the multi-voicedness of folk song because it so well encapsulated the Russian quality of *sobornost,'* or unity in collectivity.[170] For Briusova, teaching folk song was the key to unveiling the essential elements of Russian character, innately embedded in the hearts and minds of the *narod*. With that in mind, her students' relative disinterest only served to inspire Briusova to seek other methods to develop a shared affinity for folk song.

Working with children allowed Briusova to cultivate young students' "native" or *rodnoi* taste. [171] By exposing children early on to folk song and Russian classical music, Briusova could curate a pedagogical experience devoid of Western influence. In choral and "listening to music," *slushanie muzyki* classes, she proposed starting the children out listening to single-voice songs without accompaniment, to hone the children's aural skills. Next, the children would move on to sing single-voice, unaccompanied folk songs. For this, she recommended, among others, Rimskii-Korsakov's and Balakirev's respective folk song collections. Over a series of weeks, children would progress to singing folk songs in multi-voice choral textures. By the end of their

[169] Ibid, l. 4.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Notice that *rodnoi* shares a root – *rod*, meaning birth – with our favorite word, *narod*. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 135. [Author's translation].

first year of study, the children would be able to sing a piece of Russian classical literature, for example, a song from Rimskii-Korsakov's opera *Sadko* in a full choir.[172]

In addition to teaching folk music, Briusova fostered appreciation for Russian musical heritage more broadly by centering the work of Russian classical composers – Glinka, Tchaikovsky, the *Kuchka* – in her concerts and curricula. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, she organized through the Moscow Soviet a series of concert-lecture cycles in December of 1917 on the following themes: "Folk Song," "Our Classics," "Tchaikovsky and his Followers" and "The School of the Mighty *Kuchka*."[173] In her choral classes, Briusova encouraged her students to stretch their abilities and sing the arias from Russian operas by the end of each semester.[174] In her *slushanie muzyki* classes, Briusova used works by *Kuchka* members Rimskii-Korsakov and Mussorgsky as well as the more lesser-known Russian composers like Anatoly Liadov and the avant-garde Alexander Scriabin.[175]

While it was clearly important to Briusova to prioritize music written by Russians in her curricula, she never mentioned their "Russianness" as the reason she chose to present their music in class. Instead she had her students listen to the music for emotion and narrative, allowing the composer and their music to simply become a conduit through which the listener could better understand their own inner self. For instance, in a lecture on how to teach *slushanie muzyki*

[172] Example of the program of study in choral singing and listening to music classes (1918–1919 academic year), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 19, l. 1-3 cited in Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 130-136. [Author's translation].

[173] N. I. Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 49. [Author's translation].

[174] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 134.

[175] Neither Scriabin, one of Briusova's favorite composers, nor Liadov were well known, based on the fact that their names did not make an appearance in the student surveys mentioned at the beginning of this section. Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 71-82. Briusova wrote a number of articles about Alexander Scriabin including "Dva puti muzykal'noi mysli: Chopin i Scriabin" [Two paths of musical thought: Chopin and Scriabin"] in *Melos: Knigi o muzyke* (1917): 73-77 and "Po storonu Skriabina" [On the Side of Scriabin] 1923.

classes, Briusova instructs the teacher to play Liadov's Prelude in b minor from *Seven Preludes, op. 11* and open up the class to discuss

> how each [student] heard the piece; how the minutes passed for them as the music was playing; whether their attention followed the full music path from the moment of the appearance of the first to the very last sound; with what words they might describe the general action of the music; and [how they might imagine] the spiritual state of the work's author."[176]

Briusova believed that music speaks to the soul, and, by corollary, she believed that Russian music spoke more articulately to the Russian soul than any other kind of music could. However, that did not mean that she completely excluded the music of non-Russians from her *slushanie muzyki* classes. For instance, she frequently referenced the music of Frederick Chopin, the ethnically Polish composer and piano virtuoso who is best known for his composition of 24 piano preludes written in every key.[177] She suggested using his emotion-packed preludes to teach new listeners to follow movement and feeling in a piece. In fact, she wrote that if Liadov's prelude did not elicit a response from the students, the teacher could always switch to playing Chopin's e-minor or C-major prelude to see if students responded better to Chopin's brand musical thought.[178] Of course, Chopin's Polish ethnicity linked his music more closely to the Russian *narod*, than Western music ever could.

On rare occasions, Briusova did endorse listening to Western classics. Having studied at the Moscow Conservatory, Briusova was well versed in the Western canon, though she was wary of the effect its corrupting influence might have over students' emerging Russian musical taste. With younger students, Briusova recommended only introducing Western music into the

[176] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 87.
[177] When Chopin was born, modern-day Poland was a part of the Russian Empire. Despite being an Imperial Russian subject, he would be considered Polish, ethnically distinct from the Russian *narod*. Still, his Polish ethnicity meant that his music was closer to the "soul of the *narod*" than Western influence (even though he himself spent a considerable amount of time in Paris).
[178] Minor, *Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education*, 88.

curricula in students' fourth or fifth year of study.[179] For older students, who already knew and loved Western composers like Beethoven, addressing the question of Western music in the curricula was a more complicated question. As seen in the survey mentioned at the beginning of this section, there were many more students who listed their interest in Beethoven than those interested in Russian classical composers like Mikhail Glinka, the so-called "Father of Russian Music."[180] Unable to suspend Soviet citizens' appreciation for Western music, eventually the State repatriated certain figures from the Western canon who could fit a proletarian mold. Beethoven, for instance, for his revolutionary music during the time of Napoleon, was recognized as a hero of the Soviet Union.[181]

As we have seen in this section, one of the central purposes of mass music education for Briusova was cultivating an appreciation among the *narod* for their common Russian cultural heritage. However, within the new Soviet state, this Russo-centrism could no longer be the sole mission of mass music education. As Briusova herself said, "it is impossible to build a life on old ideals and old forms."[182] While at times she seemed too stubborn to admit it, she did realize that not every student could relate to Russian folk song, that not every student liked the Russian classics. In response to this fact, Briusova endorsed the creation of an entirely new proletarian culture, something that the people – the Soviet *narod* – could call their own. Though Briusova's adoption of this class-based version of cultural nationalism better suited the anti-nationalist

[179] Minor, Nadezhda Briusova and Her School of Music Education, 135.
[180] In fact, of the 41 people surveyed, only one person listed that they had heard the music of Glinka in concert. Programs of study and lectures of Nadezhda Briusova for choral singing and listening to music in public education schools and questionnaires of listeners with responses about their knowledge of music (1917), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 17, l. 12.
[181] Fairclough, 30.
[182] Quoting from Briusova's address to the First All-Russian Conference of Proletarian Cultural-Enlightenment Organizations (Proletkult) on Sept. 17, 1918 in Rosenberg, 452.

stance of Soviet state, it never fully eclipsed her commitment to the preservation of Russian cultural heritage.

3 - Class-based cultural nationalism: mass song vs. folk song

In 1918, Briusova began working for Proletkult, an organization that concerned itself exclusively with the creative needs of the proletariat. Unlike other institutions at which Briusova worked (Narkompros, Shaniavskii University, for example) which sought to democratize access to musical knowledge for the *narod* as a whole, Proletkult was far more interested in fostering the musical innovations of the toiling masses. In a Proletkult meeting in February 1918, it was decided that the very first task for proletarian music education should be "the development of the creative powers of the proletariat in the area of musical arts."[183] This meant opening up workers' clubs where laborers could practice and perform in amateur choirs, orchestras, and folk ensembles, training proletarians to become orchestra and choral directors, and, most of all, teaching the next generation of proletarian composers. This class-based approach limited the scope of mass music education. No longer for the whole *narod*, mass music education, at least in the eyes of Proletkult, was for the sole benefit of the working classes.

One invention of proletarian culture was mass song.[184] In a composition class Briusova designed in the 1920s, the very first assignment for first-year students was to write one single- and one multi-voiced mass song. While Briusova did not precisely define for her students the compositional requirements of the genre, she did stipulate that mass songs should reflect Soviet reality and bear a representative title like "Song of the Red Army" or "Song of the

[183] Briusova, "Mass Music Education Work in the First Years After October (from Memory)," 50. [Author's translation].

[184] Proletkult functioned as a kind of paternalistic intelligentsia, training the proletarian masses to sing and compose mass song and then claiming that mass song was an original proletarian invention.

Komsomol."[185] In an article she wrote in 1928, Briusova explained that mass song should have high-artistic value. It should be not only accessible to the masses, but powerful and inspirational enough to provide them with "what they need in their revolutionary battle, in the battle for the strengthening of revolutionary conquest and in their newly won life."[186] And most importantly, it should be written by "a member of the new society and a builder of this new life."[187]

In theory, mass song and folk song were similar. Both were vocal genres which appealed to the masses and were written by members of the lower classes. They were typically simple and expressive songs, free from convention, that could be song in large groups. But there was one essential distinction between mass song and folk song: mass song was written by and for proletariats. By the mid-1920s, the Soviets, who had just won the Civil War and were now entering the New Economic Period (NEP), were slowly gaining control of the arts. They wanted to promote an art form that represented the Soviet ideals and the Soviet people, and folk song simply could not be that genre. It was too deeply entrenched in the conservative, regressive history of the Russian peasantry.

Amongst the Bolsheviks, there was a deep distrust of the peasantry. Marxist theory, which assumed that a socialist revolution could only ever happen in a highly industrialized state where proletarians made up the majority of the country's inhabitants, neglected to imagine a role for the peasantry in a Communist revolution. This was a problem for the Bolsheviks because, at the time of the 1917 Revolution, the peasantry accounted for 85% of the Russian population. Acknowledging that in order for Communism to succeed in Russia the peasants would have to play a part, Lenin augmented Marxist theory by including the peasantry within his definition of

[185] The Komsomol was a Communist youth organization. Programs of courses at the Music Technicum, created by Nadezhda Briusova (1920s), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 34 (1920s).
[186] N. I. Briusova, "O massovoi pesne [about Mass Song]" in *Muzyka i Revoliutsiia* no. 9 (1928): 25.
[187] Ibid, 26.

the proletarian masses. However, despite ostensibly lumping together the peasantry and the proletarians, the Bolsheviks continued to view the peasantry with unease. Leon Trotsky, for one, deemed Russian peasant culture objectively unredeemable, due to the peasantry's historically conservative values such as loyalty to the tsar and Russian Orthodoxy, that perpetuated Russian backwardness and threatened the Communist cause.[188]

Because folk song was so entangled in the conservative history of the peasantry, it became politically treacherous for Briusova to continue her pedagogical emphasis on folk song. As a result, in the late 1920s, Briusova attempted to distance herself from her prior stance on folk song. In a 1928 article, she writes:

> It is impossible to "resurrect" ancient [folk] songs these days when the old is separated by such a great barrier from the new. It is impossible to build the defenses of a new musical language with the image of the language of a bygone era. You can't force city-dwellers to think according to the ways of a peasant.

This is a complete reversal of Briusova's previous attitude towards folk song. What Briusova had once lauded as the genre closest to the native tastes of the *narod*, Briusova now disparages as "ancient" and obsolete. In fact, she makes no mention of the *narod*. Instead, she depicts a clear distinction between the authors of this music – the city-dwellers, the proletariats – and the culturally irrelevant peasants. Despite her harsh words about folk song's obsolescence, Briusova adds, "that does not mean that all similar traits of the content and formal structure of folk song must be thrown out from contemporary mass song."[189] And so it seems that even in a political climate that disparages peasant culture, Briusova cannot deny the pedagogical value of folk song, the musical genre she had championed for most of her career.

[188] Vujačić, 175.
[189] Ibid, 27.

Ultimately, refuting the cultural worth of folk song became an untenable position for Briusova, who never lost her interest in the genre. In the late-1930s and 1940s, she reaffirmed her love for folk song, traveling across the USSR to collect melodies from different Soviet socialist republics (SSRs) and writing articles about their pedagogical and cultural value.[190] Briusova's folk song research trip was permitted thanks to a shift in Soviet state's attitude towards cultural nationalism. Under the pressure of rapid industrialization, collectivization, and later World War II, the Soviet people were becoming more proletarian and more unified. In response, Stalin called for cultural projects which could better represent this emerging *sovetskii narod*, the Soviet people. Moreover, with dreams of global revolution long gone, Stalin's "socialism in one country" policy had inspired the birth of Soviet-Russian nationalism.[191] Briusova's research trip played into this new Soviet-Russian nationalism. As she imagined it, she was taking part in the creation of a "unified national musical language." As she writes,

> The fight for better, more realistic forms of musical reflection is in large part connected to the fight for the fullness and preservation of the *unified national musical language* [emphasis mine]. Comrade Stalin said in the 16th Congress of VKP(b) [All-Russian Communist Party], that we must 'allow national cultures to develop and turn themselves around, revealing all their tendencies, in order to create the conditions for merging them into one single culture, with one common language.'[192]

The Communists' policy on cultural nationalism had come full circle. Under Lenin, the State was tasked with supporting national culture within non-Russian SSRs while suppressing

[190] N. I. Briusova, "Muzykal'nyi iazyk narodnoi pesni [Musical Language of Folk Song]" in *Narodnoe tvorchestvo* no. 2-3 (1937): 41-45; N. I. Briusova, "K voprosu ob izuchenii narodnoi pesni [To the question about the study of folk song]" in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* (1947); N. I. Briusova, "Pol'skie narodnye pesni [Polish Folk Song]" in *Sovetskaia muzyka* no. 6 (1947c): 104-106. N. I. Briusova, "Strannye nardonye pesni [Bizarre Folk Songs]" in *Za proletarskuiu muzyku* no. 6 (1930b): 7-13. N. I. Briusova, "Vtorichnaia zhizn' russkoi narodnoi pesni v operakh sovetskikh kompozitorov [Secondary Life of Russian Folk Song in the Operas of Soviet Composers]" in *Sovetskaia muzyka* no. 8 (1946b): 57-68.

[191] Vujacic, 180.

[192] Briusova, "To the question about the study of folk song," 43.

Russian nationalism. Under Stalin, the autonomy of national minorities' cultures became inconsequential. According to Stalin's vision, the goal now was to produce a single, unified *national* culture, with Russian culture first among equals.[193] Briusova's attitude towards Russian folk song and the Russian cultural tradition had gone full circle right alongside the Communist Party's national policy. Shifting from Russo-centrism, to the rejection of folk song, and back again, Briusova's attitude towards folk song reflects all the contradictions of the Soviet policy on cultural nationalism. However, it also shows consistency. Though the definition changed, Briusova's mass music education program always upheld an agenda of cultural nationalism, whether it took part in the preservation of Russian cultural heritage or the creation of a new Soviet-Russian culture.

[193] For more on Stalin's idea of a Soviet-Russian national identity, see Vujacic, 175-185.

Conclusion

In the last century, the Russian people have experienced three political systems: the Russian empire, the Soviet Union, and now the Russian Federation. Russian history is characterized by these turning points, these moments of rupture when a new culture seems to replace entirely the culture that came before. Many view Russian history this way, marveling at this country's uncanny propensity for self-destruction and rebirth. This thesis sought to intervene in this perception of Russian history, putting forth Nadezhda Briusova's mass music education program as an example of continuity across the revolutionary divide. Looking for continuity – even and especially in times of immense social, political, and cultural upheaval – is important. It shows resilience, persistence. It is proof that the human spirit is adaptable and that everything is connected, that nothing comes from nothing.

Case in point, Soviet music culture did not simply appear the day after the October Revolution. It was *created*. It was created by people like Briusova, who carried on working – teaching music classes, organizing concerts, writing about music – in 1918 the same way they had in years prior. Of course, that is not to say that Soviet music culture did not differ from late-Imperial music culture; it did. As we have seen, crossing the revolutionary divide meant that some doors swung open for mass music educators while others slammed shut. State-funding from government organizations such as Narkompros meant that mass music education could happen on a much larger scale than it had before the Revolution. However, this state-funding mandated a class-based audience for music education programs. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the years after 1917, mass music educators could no longer simply educate the *narod*. If they wanted to enjoy political legitimacy, their mass music education classes had to serve a specifically Bolshevik purpose, i.e., elevating proletarian consciousness. In a similar vein, as

discussed in Chapter 3, one element of mass music education programs common in late-Imperial Russia – an emphasis on Russian cultural heritage – had a complex transition into the Soviet era. The promotion of Russian classics and folk song threatened to betray Russian nationalistic sentiment, unacceptable in a Communist state, so mass song, a Revolutionary genre written by and for proletariats, was celebrated instead.

Cultural politics in the Soviet Union was a moving target. For instance, even though elevating proletarian consciousness was the official Party rationale for Soviet mass music education programs, Briusova continued to allude to the late-Imperial ideals of educating the *narod* and the universal experience of listening to and understanding music while maintaining influential positions in the state apparatus. Similarly, the Party's strict policy on nationalities, which decried Great Russian Chauvinism, did not stop Party leaders like Lenin from praising the riches of Russian cultural heritage. Though for a time Briusova promoted the composition of mass song, the revolutionary genre, the subject closest to her heart remained folk song, despite the Party's distrust and disavowal of peasant culture. These ambiguities demonstrate just how changeable the Party line on the arts really was.

Briusova's role in creating Soviet music culture from the ground up, combined with the malleability of the still-developing Party line, may explain why her work – which never truly ceased to uphold late-Imperial ideals – survived Soviet censorship and the Stalinist Purges. Briusova was a figure of continuity and change. She was adaptable, yet constant, resilient, yet flexible. Her work was simple and her message versatile: teach people music and they will learn how to create and understand creation. Though she may not have won Party membership in 1930, her work was celebrated at the end of her life, when the State awarded her the title of Emeritus Activist in the Arts.

Briusova was one of the founders of Soviet music culture. In her position as pedagogue, she taught the very first generations of Soviets how and why they should think about and value music. She was not responsible for training the next great Soviet composers. She did something more important than that. She brought music to the masses, the *narod*, as she so lovingly called them. She made sure that the Soviet people maintained a strong and fervent love for the arts. In a political climate which distrusted any late-Imperial bourgeois specialists, Briusova found a way to protect Russian cultural heritage and musical excellence. She also found a way to make sure that Russian cultural heritage made its way into the hearts and minds of many more people than it had before the Revolution by training the next generation of mass music educators.

I started writing this thesis because I did not know why I had spent five years pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Cello Performance. I wanted an answer to that question – what does music do? I looked to Briusova's work because I figured that whatever she was saying to the *narod* – to people who did not benefit from the Conservatory-level education that I had received – to convince them of music's value should be able to convince me too. And it did. She taught me how music can bring people together, by gathering strangers together in a room to sit and listen. (And in the age of COVID-19, writing this thesis in the midst of a nation-wide quarantine, I recognize the need for music's connectivity all the more). She taught me that there is no barrier between performers and audience members because really, we are all listening. She taught me that arts are about creativity and creation and that life is too. She taught me that there is value in thinking musically and that you don't have to be a musician to do it. She gave me permission to be an artist on my own terms, to think about music from within my own head as I listen for emotion, characters, and storyline. And, perhaps most importantly, she taught me that it is my

turn to share what I know, to go out into the world and teach the joys of playing and listening to music.

Glossary of Terms:

Important Words and Phrases:

edinomyshlenie - literally, of the same mind; close friends

Kuchka - The Mighty Five or Mighty Handful, a group of five Russian composers from the 19th century, including Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky, Balakirev, and Rimsky-Korsakov

narod - the common people, folk

narodnye pesnie - folk songs

obrazovanie - education

pedfak - the pedagogical faculty in Moscow Conservatory, established 1921

prosveshchenie - enlightenment, or education

russkaia dusha - the Russian soul

slushanie muzyki - listening to music, a class that Briusova developed with Boleslav Iavorskii in the pre-Revolutionary period

sobornost' - unity in collectivity, as in singing in a choir

vospitanie - upbringing, or education

Organizations and Abbreviations:

Free Music School: predecessor to the Moscow People's Conservatory, founded in 1862

Moscow People's Conservatory (MPC) (1906-1917): the Moscow People's Conservatory was founded by Nadezhda Briusova, Boleslav Iavorskii, Konstantin Igumnov, and Sergei Taneev and sought to provide the *narod* with high-quality music education

Glavprofobr: Main Administration of Professional Education

GUS: State Academic Council

MUZO: *muzykal'nyi otdel,* music section (name of the music section at Narkompros and Proletkult)

Narkompros: The People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment, the Soviet state's department of education

NEP: New Economic Period

RAPM: Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians

Proletkult: Proletarian Culture Organizations

VUZ (plural, VUZy): Institutions of Higher Learning

Names:

Mily Balakirev: member of the *Kuchka* and founder of the Free Music School in St. Petersburg

Valerii Briusov: Nadezhda Briusova's brother, a famous Symbolist poet

Alexander Goldenweiser: conservative dean of the Moscow Conservatory who disparaged the mission of the pedagogical faculty

Nadezhda Krupskaya: married to V. I. Lenin, leader in Soviet (particularly children's) education, appointed to the Central Committee in 1927 and named Deputy Commissar of the Enlightenment in 1929

Anatolii Lunacharsky: the Commissar of Enlightenment, head of Narkompros from 1917-1929

Boleslav Iavorskii: Briusova's close friend, co-developer of *slushanie muzyki* classes, creator of the music theory on "modal rhythm"

Konstantin Igumnov: Briusova's piano professor at Moscow Conservatory and a co-founder of the Moscow People's Conservatory

Sergei Taneev: Briusova's music theory professor at Moscow Conservatory and a co-founder of the Moscow People's Conservatory

Journals:

Iskusstvo (Art)
K novym beregam muzykal'nogo iskusstvo (To the Other Shore of Musical Art)
Muzyka (Music)
Muzyka i revoliutsiia (Music and Revolution)
Muzykal'naia nov' (Musical Virgin Soil)
Muzykal'noe obrazovanie (Music Education)
Muzykal'nyi sovremennik (Musical Contemporary)
Proletarskii muzykant (Proletarian Musician)
Russkaia muzykal'naia gazeta (Russian Musical Newspaper)
Sovetskaia muzyka (Soviet Music)
Trudy i dni (Works and Days)
Vesy (The Scales)
Vestnik zhizni (The Bulletin of Life)
Za proletarskuiu muzyku (To Proletarian Music)

Archival information:

RGALI (*Russkii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva)*: Russian State Archive of Literature and Art
fond (f.): collection
opis (op.): subsection
edinoe khranenie (ed. kh.): file

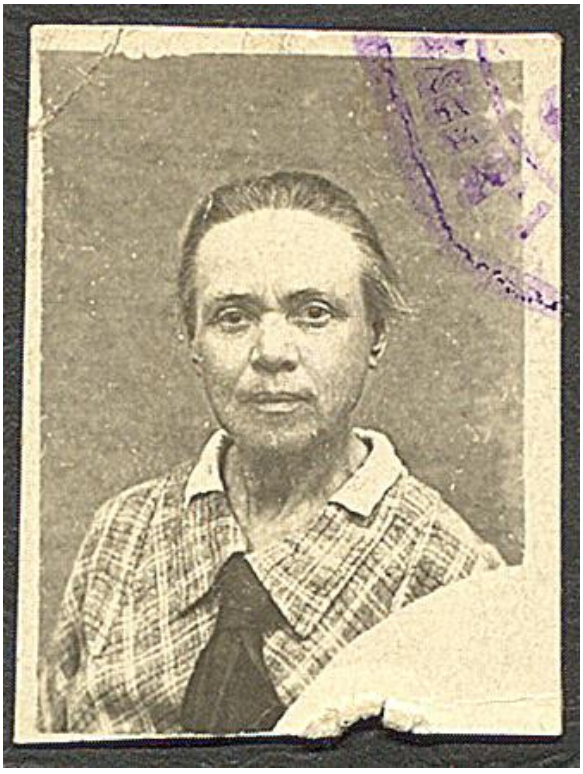
Photo Gallery:

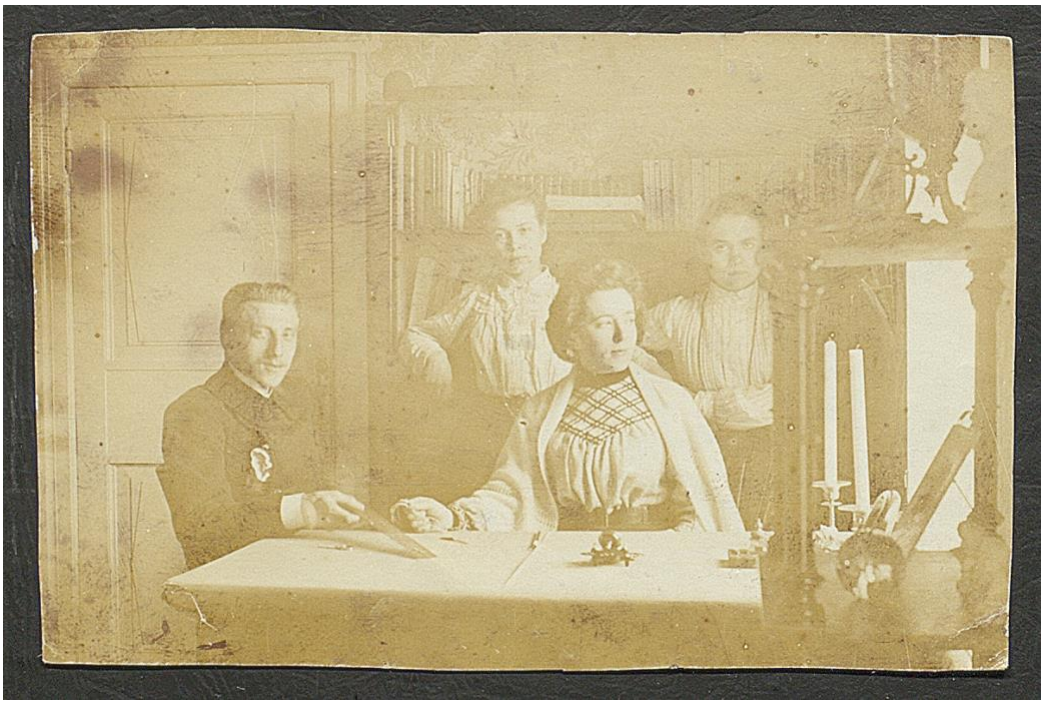
Pictures from Nadezhda Briusova's private music school's production of their children's opera, "The Fish and the Fisherman." Group portraits of "The Story of the Fish and the Fisherman" (1913), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 212.

Portraits of Nadezhda Briusova:

Upper left: Svetlana Romanova Stepanova, ed. *Musical Life of Moscow in the First Years After October. October 1917–1920. Chronicles. Documents. Materials.]*. Moscow: The Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture, 1972.

Upper right, lower left, and lower right: Portraits of Briusova, individual and in groups (1946), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 211.





Above: Briusova (back row, right corner) with a group of people (unknown). Portraits of Briusova, individual and in groups (1946), RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. kh. 211.

Below: Briusova in an interview about the USSR people's history of music study with Semyon Isaakovich Schliefstein ((1940s). G. Pribegina and Leonid Sidel′nikov. *Moskovskaia Konservatoriia: 1866-1991* (Moskva: "Muzyka", 1991), 95.

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